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Causeway

Penry Williams

September 5. 1905.

L.S.C.

THE WHITE CAUSEWAY

"Before Garnett had recovered from his surprise, Mr. Austin stepped into the skiff" (See p. 73).

[*Frontispiece.*

THE WHITE CAUSEWAY

By F. FRANKFORT MOORE. Author of "The Jessamy Bride," "The Original Woman," "They Call it Love," etc.

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THE WHITE CAUSEWAY

CHAPTER I

HE volunteered to point out the mountains to her, and to give to every one of them its name. She said it would be so kind of him. She wanted to have every mountain in Switzerland pointed out to her and to learn its name. He looked as if he wished for no better employment, and he expressed himself to this effect with the air of a devout microscopist anxious to make revelations of the infinitely small.

He named the peaks with the proprietary air of the Englishman in Switzerland—as if he owned them all, or as if he had been present at the baptism of every one of them. That was what Sir Everard Calthorpe said, turning his back upon as many of the mountains as he could—the *dei majores* of those tremendous Olympians that encircle the basin of Saas Fée.

"An Englishman speaks patronisingly of the Atlantic and condescendingly of the Matterhorn. Come into the hotel and have a peg, Garnett: the mountains will be there all the afternoon; they are the plaster-of-Paris ornaments of the bridecake—inviolable."

Arthur Garnett had his finger pointed to the twin peaks of the Dom.

"That's the Dom. It was climbed from the other side by a chap whom I met here," he said. "A bit stiff."

"I should say he was a bit stiff after it; any one would. So will my peg be," said Sir Everard, strolling off to where the pack-mules were being lightened by the porters at the foot of the stone steps of the terrace.

Mr. Garnett paid no attention to his inattentive friend. He went on from the Dom to the next mountain in that sublime panorama, laying his left hand on Olive Austin's arm and doing the pointing with his other hand. The attitude was a perfectly natural one. It is almost impossible to point out a particular mountain to a young woman in any other way.

"That is the Südlenzspitz," he said, bringing her eyes round to the right of the Dom—they were standing with their backs to the hotel. "It is not one of the big climbs; there is a sleeping-place in a good position—you can just see the hut from here. On the other side of the Dom is the Tæschorn, and next to it the Alphubel. Then that great mass directly in front of us above the Fée Glacier is the Allalinhorn. Keep your eyes a little to the left—quick!—there it goes—a snow avalanche. You hear the crash? That is a great place for avalanches—small things—hotel-keepers' avalanches. You see that fine mountain to the left? That is the Mittaghorn—a magnificent fellow; and on still farther is the Plattje. The Italian Pass is just there."

"Don't tell me any more," cried Olive. "The Dom and the Mittaghorn—those two are quite enough for a beginning. I think I should do well to go cautiously at

first over those slippery and precipitous names. Pity, isn't it, that one can't get one's memory studded with climbing-nails as we do our boots? Yes, that's the Dom; and that's the—— Now what did you say the name was? —I had it a second ago. Mittaghorn, of course."

"You have done very well," he said. "In the course of a day or two you will have roped them all in a line, so that, if one should show signs of slipping, the others would support it."

"At any rate I have two of them, the Dom and the—the—Mittaghorn. I'll hold on to them with the pick of my ice-axe," she said with a laugh.

"Add on the Südlenzspitz."

"It's too slippery. It won't stay in my mind for a minute. Mr. Garnett I will not allow you to cut steps in my memory for all those names to climb in by. I'll try to retain the Dom and the Mittaghorn until we meet again."

"You have done very well for the first ten minutes. It was sheer cruelty insisting on those names before you have rested from your long walk. You have done extremely well, Miss Austin."

"I really believe that I have. That last steep bit from Saas Grund was trying. You see, I thought that we had come to the end of our journey. It was like calling to see some one on the tenth floor of some flats and finding that there was no lift."

"Just. Few friendships would survive such a trial. But you are not in the least knocked up."

"I cannot tell until I have sat down for a while. But I certainly should be if you piled the names of any more of your mountains on me."

They walked up the stone steps and on to the broad verandah of the hotel. The canvas awning had been lowered, and on one of the cane chairs in the shade sat Lady Calthorpe. She had ridden on a mule from Stalden, and so was more tired than Olive, who had walked through the splendid valley with the others of the party. Lady Calthorpe had found several friends on her arrival at the hotel. There was Mrs. Sampson, a distinguished lady climber who was restless over an enforced rest of two days: she had given an ankle a strain—not a sprain, she was careful to insist—on the highest peak of the Südlenzspitz, and there was no way to restore it to normality except by resting. And there was a certain strongly built Austrian lady with the title of countess; also a climber, but not of the standing of Mrs. Sampson on the Alpine *Almanach de Gotha*.

"Mrs. Sampson is an ironclad battleship, the Countess is only an armoured cruiser," Sir Everard remarked, in making a conscientious attempt to differentiate between the two, for the benefit of a friend who was anxious to learn, and whose ambition was fully satisfied by Sir Everard.

Arthur Garnett was acquainted with both ladies, and had many inquiries to put to them respecting the snow in certain directions, the possibilities of certain passes, the serration of certain seracs, the meteorology of the latest accident, the whereabouts of Mrs. Holmes—the last-named topic was one of absorbing interest. Mrs. Holmes was the only rival whom Mrs. Sampson took seriously, and her she took very seriously. Her name stirred Mrs. Sampson as the name of Wellington might be supposed to have stirred Napoleon—as the name of Bismarck may have stirred Bazaine.

The whereabouts of Mrs. Holmes as a topic had often been discussed on the verandah of the Grand Hotel, Saas Fée, and Mrs. Sampson had so frequently expressed her indifference on the subject of Mrs. Holmes and her rumoured climbs—Mrs. Sampson invariably said "her rumoured climbs," laying a particularly feline stress upon the adjective—that every one was convinced that she thought more of Mrs. Holmes and her feats than of Mr. Sampson and all her other domestic obligations. Mr. Sampson was a yachtsman, and so detested reefs—he always alluded to the Alps as reefs.

And then Mrs. Sampson began to talk about her own climbs. . . . . .

It was an hour before Arthur Garnett got to his room to wash off the grit of his grind through the thirteen miles of the valley from Stalden, and to change his garments. Olive Austin and Lady Calthorpe had stolen off the verandah just as Mrs. Sampson was getting excited over her narration of her desertion by her two guides on the Matterhorn, simply because it had begun to snow.

He went out upon the little balcony of his window and sent his eyes out once more upon the glorious panorama with which he had been acquainted since his early climbing days. There they were—the grand mountains which he loved, looking across the huge hollow basin of Saas Fée. He seemed to hear through the keen sweet air of the sunlit noon a voice of welcome to him from every mountain. Every mountain now had found a tongue, and every voice that he heard was the voice of an old friend. There they were; the everlasting friendship of the snowy peaks was breathed upon him across the glacier. Beneath the blue of the sky the crystals were sparkling

on the irregular ridges that cut in upon the slopes of the great peak ranges, and lower down the dazzling breadths of ermine were splashed with grotesque black shadows of projecting bluffs and cliffs whose front had never been touched by sun since the world began. Under his eyes rose the spire of the church, sharply defined against the white background of mountains, above the roofs of the village. He looked for all the old landmarks—the little bridges over the grey torrent, the dark-green patches of herbage which lost themselves among the darker pines that spread irregularly along the way to the moraines; he found every landmark that he looked for, and there was conveyed to him an impression of unchanging friendship. He was conscious of the tranquil happiness of a home-coming. All the face of this glorious nature was smiling a welcome to him.

Voices on the verandah of the hotel floated up to where he was standing. He put his head over the iron rail of his balcony and looked down. Several groups were among the chairs beyond the line of the canvas awning—men and women of the sojourners at the hotel. Some had just returned from the local glacier and were greeting the new arrivals. The men were as picturesque as convicts, and the women twined themselves about their alpenstocks in the pose, but without the colour, of Watteau shepherdesses.

And while he watched the groups, there suddenly moved out from the concealment of the awning to the rail at the head of the steps the girl to whom he had pointed out the peaks a short time before—Olive Austin. She had changed her dress, and was now wearing something filmy instead of the climbing costume which she had worn when talking through the long valley in the morning. She was

now without a hat. Arthur Garnett looked down upon the silken loveliness of her brown hair. She had stepped into the sunshine, and the sunshine was not reflected from her hair, but mixed with it.

She remained only for a short time under his eyes; turning quickly round as if in response to a call, she nodded to some one under the awning and took a step beneath its concealment.

A sigh came from him as he left his balcony. He stood for some time thoughtful in the middle of his room; then he seated himself on a portmanteau with his back turned to the window, which framed a ridge of the Allalinhorn done in Chinese white against a background of exquisite blue sky. He put his head down to one hand, his elbow was resting on his knees, and he became lost in thought.

At last he sprang to his feet, saying, "If I lose her I am lost!"

That seemed to be the sum of all his thoughts. And yet he had trained himself to come to conclusions only after days of deliberation; and even then he was so reasonable as to be always open to change his mind, should it be proved to him that his first conclusion was deficient in wisdom. He was no longer a very young man. He had passed thirty by a year or two, and a grey hair or two showed above his ears. He had never fallen in love in all his life. He had differed from Nature in his views on a subject which Nature has made her own, for he held that there was a certain want of sanity in falling in love. Why *falling*, he wished to know? It was sane enough to love—yes, upon occasions; but why should a man *fall* in love?

Of course, being a scientific man, and on perfectly

friendly, though scarcely cordial, terms with Nature, he was quite prepared to explain that the act of falling was a trick of Nature devised for the benumbing of a man's reason and judgment, so that Nature's great object, which is simply the mating of men and women, might be effected. But since civilisation had accepted the duty of the honest broker between man and Nature, why should not civilisation do away with this relic of the cave-dwellers' courtship—this benumbing of the faculties which was the result of precipitancy in loving?

Nature, of course, wanted to hurry on the business of matchmaking to which she devoted so much of her attention, and the mothers of daughters in his neighbourhood were on the side of Nature in this matter. But Arthur Garnett knew better than Nature and the other mothers. He was well aware of the fact that Nature has ever looked askance at the monogamist. Her principle of a lightning courtship was an excellent one under certain conditions; a quick courtship and a new one every month, these were the conditions. It did not matter much if marriage was a failure now and again in such circumstances; when a man has so splendid a reserve to fall back upon, a failure now and again might be viewed with equanimity—it did not interfere with the noble average of nuptial happiness maintained in accordance with Nature's promptings.

But civilisation gave prominence to monogamy, and thus the most important of the conditions of marriage was completely altered. When the terms were not One Maid One Month, but One Wife One Life, it was obvious that a man should be careful, and employ sanity and civilisation as his allies. Sanity he had held to be the pneumatic

brake, and civilisation the compressed air buffer which minimised the effect of the concussion due to precipitancy in the matter of love. In brief, to go to Nature for similes, Nature's ideal was the swoop of a hawk, but Arthur Garnett's was the alighting of a dove.

He had been very sane all his life. Of course, he had had a bump or two before he was twenty-five, but his pneumatic brake had broken the force of every concussion; so that at thirty-one he was without a scar.

And yet now, at thirty-two, he was standing in the middle of his room, at Saas Fée in the Canton of Valais, having clenched his hands and sworn softly to himself, that if he were to lose the girl of whom he was thinking at that moment he would himself be lost.

It has been known for some time that one of Nature's principles is that a few mild attacks of a disease act in mitigation of the virulence of a severe attack of the same disorder.

It was clear that Arthur Garnett was in the throes of a most violent form of the thing from which he believed himself to enjoy immunity.

CHAPTER II

THE hotel telescope on its imposing tripod was aimed at the awkward peak of the Südlenzspitz, and now and again some one went to the eyepiece, and after looking through the tube, made a report to the groups on the terrace—a report of cutting steps, and re-roping and glissading—a report full of the technicalities of the craft of mountaineering which required to be explained to none on that terrace. And in every report there occurred the name of Christy Carew. It was Christy Carew who, with Dr. Falkland and two guides, had slept in the Südlenzspitz hut the previous night, and was now visible through the telescope making the ascent of the mountain. Every now and then the little party of climbers were lost to view, but they promptly reappeared among the snow, sometimes hanging on like threaded spiders to the face of the cliff, and occasionally crawling like ants along a narrow ridge, and their performance was criticised with discrimination by their friends on the terrace of the hotel.

Olive Austin was greatly interested in the progress of the climbers. Arthur had not failed to see the little light that came into her eyes when Lady Calthorpe mentioned that Christy Carew had come from Stalden to Fée, and that she had heard that he was climbing the Südlenzspitz.

"What a pity it is that we did not arrive a couple of days sooner; you might have joined the party," said Lady Calthorpe to Arthur Garnett.

"I don't know that the interest in the Südlenzspitz would be greatly increased thereby," Arthur had replied. He had not forgotten the little flash of interest on the face of the girl at the mention of the name of another man; already she was at the eyepiece of the telescope, trying to bring Christy Carew opposite the object-glass. Only an hour had elapsed since Arthur had made up his mind that he loved Olive, and yet he was now experiencing some of the pangs of the mature lover.

He sincerely hoped that no accident might happen to the man on the mountain. He had a feeling that if Carew were to be the hero of an important climbing accident, he would absorb so much attention that he, Arthur Garnett, would have no chance of speaking the words which he now knew he was bound to utter in making an attempt to save himself from being lost.

This feeling was in accordance with the traditions of the true lover, who ever thinks of his own interests first. He prayed for the safety of the man on the mountain, simply because he had seen a brightness in Olive's face at the mention of that man's name. He had developed within an hour all the characteristics of the true lover, of which jealousy and selfishness are the least reprehensible.

He thought that she was looking too long at the Südlenzspitz, so when the climbers had disappeared behind the boundaries of the great glacier, he turned the telescope in another direction for her. He brought it to bear upon the place of loose snow at the brink of the seracs, and she was fortunate enough to see there the sliding of one

of the finest avalanches of the year; the roar of its slide and tumble was heard echoing among the mountains. And then he turned the tube toward the Tæschorn, and told her of the pretty figure which he had cut there two years before: he had been gaily walking across what he believed to be firm snow, when the path had given way beneath his feet and he had sunk up to the armpits in a crevasse, where he had stayed until hauled out by the rope on which his companions were strung.

"There is a good ice-axe lying quietly in the depths of that crevasse," he said; and he was (lover-like) delighted to perceive that she was greatly interested.

He let her forage for herself with the telescope. Holding one hand over her left eye, she applied her right to the eyepiece, telling him of her discoveries. He was so well acquainted with the slopes of the great basin of Fée that he was able to tell her something about all that she brought near to her by the telescope. She had found out the strange snow-causeway leading up the heights of the Allalinhorn, and this brought from him the local legend of the white figures that were to be seen at certain times walking along this perilous path that no human foot had ever trod.

She was, he could see, intensely interested at what he told her; she turned away from the telescope with the wide blue eyes and the parted lips of a child who listens to a fairy tale.

"You have been there?" she said; "at the causeway?"

"I have been on the mountain," he said; "but the strange thing is that on the mountain no such causeway as we seem to see from here is visible."

"But there it is," she said. "I saw it distinctly through the telescope. It is a high causeway—it must be very

high; you can see where it curves and winds up one of the peaks; it does not lose itself until it gets quite close to the snow on the summit."

"Yes, it all appears to be as simple as a tramway from this distance," he said; "but when one gets to the moraine it disappears. There are many such optical freaks in the Alps. What seems from afar to be one thing turns out to be something quite different when one gets a closer view. That is what makes mountaineering so fascinating, and that is how all the legends of the Alps come into existence. You have heard of the Fata Morgana, the Spectre of the Brocken, the story of the Wandering Jew, the legend of Mount Pilatus. Byron caught the true spirit of the Alps in *Manfred*. All things are not what they seem when one gets among these alluring mountains."

"But the figures on that causeway—who has seen them? Have you talked with any of the peasants who saw them?"

"I have never done more than refer to the legend in a distant way. I have seen the guides cross themselves and all that; but I don't suppose that the guides, most of whom are extremely practical men, believe in the passing of the spirits of the glacier along that fantastic causeway, which is really no causeway at all."

"But why then should they cross themselves?"

"Oh, they think it quite as well to be on the safe side. It is no exertion to make the sign of the cross, and if doing so averts a possible disaster it would be silly to omit it."

"There is no story of people being lost up there; the shapes that are seen are not the ghosts of those that have perished—who were overwhelmed by avalanches?"

"I have never heard a suggestion of that. No; the idea is that the causeway was built by the spirits of the peaks to enable the spirits of the valley to mingle with them on equal terms. It is the causeway of heaven, for it does not end where it seems to us to end, but stretches onward, upward—upward into that ethereal blue which is the colour of heaven and of Olive Austin's eyes."

She turned the heaven of her eyes upon him, but there was no smile in them.

He looked into their depths. There was a long pause before she said:

"I wonder if it is quite impossible—the spirits of the—of this earth moving silently upon a causeway to mingle with others who belong to another world. I wonder if the legend—if it is a legend—was invented by a poet."

"It certainly must have come originally from the brain of a poet—the heart of a poet—the aspiration of a poet. How could any one remain for a month among these mountains without being a poet; not a poet who writes—the poets who write are the lesser poets, the greater are those who only live. . . . I am glad that you have been interested, that you have begun to breathe of the atmosphere of our mountains. In an hour you have begun to understand the language that they speak. In a day or two you will hear the mountains calling to you aloud, the snow peaks shouting to you down the deep valleys, and you will respond with joy to their joy. I hope that you will be glad that you came here."

"I am glad. I knew that I should be glad the moment we reached Lausanne. And then came that walk through the valley from Stalden in the morning! I feel that I do not need such a causeway as that up there."

"That is not the true spirit of the mountaineer. His is one of constant aspiration. Longfellow put the breath of life into the mystery of the mountains that call to us when he wrote *Excelsior*, though he may have meant to preach. Shelley also, and Byron in his own way. Schiller breathed of the mystery, and these people behind us—all except Mrs. Sampson, who, in seeing the Alps from end to end, has seen nothing and heard nothing—even these people, and I am one of them, have had a whiff of air from that eternity of snow. And here comes Lady Calthorpe to make inquiries about the telescope."

"Any more news from the Südlenzspitz?" said Lady Calthorpe, coming from the verandah to the terrace. "Mrs. Sampson says they will not be back in time for dinner."

"You don't need to go to the Südlenzspitz for news when Mrs. Sampson is at hand," said Arthur.

He adjusted the telescope for her, and she was gratified by a glimpse of one of the threaded ants on the mountain.

They talked ice and snow for half an hour, and Olive was not silent; but Arthur was somehow glad that she said nothing to Lady Calthorpe, or the other people who circulated around the telescope, about the mysterious causeway of the Allalinhorn. He was developing further qualities of the devout lover every moment. The thought that she regarded the exchange of ideas on this matter with him as something apart from the people and the talk of everyday life—that was the interpretation which he put upon her silence in respect of the others—was a thought to cherish.

And then some of the minor mountaineers—the Sontag-jaegers, so to speak, of the climbers—began to put in an appearance, with their guides and their knapsacks, now

flattened out where they had been bulging, their kodaks and ice-axes. They had not much to say for themselves. They had only been away from the hotel since six o'clock in the morning, so not much was expected from them. Only one of them talked, and he talked a great deal. He was an Englishman with the moustache of the Kaiser. He had an immense pair of binoculars slung over his shoulder in a brand-new pig's-hide case, and leggings to match—leggings that creaked.

He stood with his legs apart in front of two veterans of the Alpine Club, who were smoking their pipes together in silence, and he told them all that he had done as if it had never been done before. In his thirst for imparting the information which he had gained for the first time that day, he described to his hearers the general appearance of the seracs, and said a few words respecting the moraine. In glacier work he assured them that the safest attitude to assume was one of complete self-confidence, and then they breathed freely, for they knew that he could never have been for a moment in danger. And then his voice fell to a whisper—for the first time—as he said that they could not be too careful in choosing a guide; for himself, he had soon found out that his guide, though highly recommended, knew nothing of his business, cutting steps—he explained with great lucidity how steps were cut—where the snow was bound to crumble away. The narrator explained that, of course, he had taken care that the snow did not crumble away; but surely a guide who knew anything of his business, etc., etc.

The two veterans smoked their pipes in grim silence until the man said that he found climbing so exhilirating that he had made up his mind to join the Alpine Club

next year. Then the two pipes were slowly withdrawn from the lips that held them, for the smiles that came over the faces of the veterans were such as would have imperilled the safety of the stoutest briars ever turned.

"I fancy that I'll like the Alpine Club," said the climber, and his leggings creaked like an omnibus brake in a dry summer as he rose to go into the hotel.

"Who is he, anyway?" said Mr. Crosby.

"I don't know *who* he is, but I know *what* he is," said Sir Henry.

"He'd like the Alpine Club; I'm afraid that the Alpine Club would not return the compliment," said Mr. Crosby, who happened to be president that year.

"I somehow have a presentiment that he will not join the Alpine Club next year," said Sir Henry, who was a member of the committee.

And then they smiled again, gave a chuckle or two, and returned their pipes to their lips.

But it was on the verandah after dinner that the battalion of climbers mustered in full strength. Here were many meetings of old friends, who, living in London within a street or two of each other, only meet once a year on the verandah of a Swiss hotel. Here the man who had just returned from the imperial peaks of the Himalayas, and had come for a month to Switzerland to rest before settling down for a year or two in England—till it was time to go on to the Andes—met his family lawyer, and, talking with him, found him an extremely nice man, his identity being completely obliterated by his general geniality and capacious knickerbockers. The Himalayan man said that the Alps served the purpose of a lock between the high level of the Himalayas and the low level of Hampstead—

it let him down gently. People who heard him talk of his descent to the Alps felt personally aggrieved.

Here, too, the inactive wives of active climbers met and discussed the theology of the valleys: their gods were not gods of the hills. The excellent young curate from the Midlands, who was said to be extremely kind to his sisters, talked of butterflies to a young woman who wore evangelical boots: they had both come to Switzerland in pursuit of lepidoptera. The distinguished King's Counsel who interpreted the "complete rest" which he had been ordered by his doctor, to mean a daily climb of six thousand feet, took instructions from an Irish solicitor in respect of the next day's ascent.

Here, too, Mrs. Sampson gave to a select circle her version of Mrs. Holmes' adventure in the sleeping hut of the Matterhorn. It appeared that some years before Mrs. Holmes had been imprisoned by a snowstorm in the Matterhorn hut for forty-eight hours, *and not alone.* That was the point of the narrative on which different readings were given by various commentators, but Mrs. Sampson's version was certainly the most amusing, and she said she had it from a brother of the man himself. But whether strictly accurate or otherwise, it was certain that Mrs. Holmes' reputation (as an adventurous woman) was not in the slightest degree affected by the adventure; and besides, Mrs. Holmes' brother was a clergyman holding the local rank of rural dean, so there was no cause for alarm.

"What do you think of all this, my dear Olive?" Sir Everard asked of the girl, who was by his side on one of the cane chairs.

Lady Calthorpe was in the Sampson circle; she had

heard the story of Mrs. Holmes and the Matterhorn hut a dozen times, and had even told it once herself—she found that it translated very well into French, and it was in this congenial language that she had given it—but she did not mind hearing it again; she perceived that Mrs. Sampson improved on it with every time of telling, and now she was giving the comments of the rural dean *ore rotundo.*

"It is all so new to me," said Olive. "I had no notion of the importance of mountaineering—of the position that it holds in the world. All the people here, all the people whom we have met since we reached Lausanne, have talked about nothing except climbing. I can quite understand the fascination of it; but it seems so strange that I should never have heard how very important a thing is mountaineering."

Sir Everard laughed.

"Oh, you may make up your mind that you will hear nothing else but mountain pidgin while you are here," said he (Sir Everard had been in the Embassy at Pekin). "Plenty muchee mountain pidgin, my dear. But if you'll take my advice, you will not be led to take their pidgin at their own valuation. The fact is that Alpinists talk as if they believed that the world revolved on their axes."

"Perhaps I shall get to think just the same before another week has passed," said Olive. "Do you know, I feel it coming on me: I suppose it is in the air. In most places where one goes one hears nothing but bridge—bridge and golf. I think that mountains are quite as well worth talking about as bridge and golf."

"Unless the golf is at St. Andrew's," said Sir Everard. "But don't be discouraged by the jargon you hear on

this verandah. Don't be discouraged by the thought that you may one day become as renowned as Mrs. Sampson. You will find that the mountains will repay you for enduring the mountaineers. You will be glad that we induced you to come."

"Oh, I am glad already," she cried. "I cannot tell you how glad I am."

"Are you?" he said. "Are you? Here is Garnett coming across the verandah to us. Are you glad?"

"You mix up things," she said, in the tones of one who is puzzled. "I said that I was glad that I had come to Switzerland."

"Then why should there be a note of reproach in your voice?" he said. "Ah, I am glad that you are glad. And here is Mr. Garnett!"

CHAPTER III

HE had been talking to Gerald Dingwall, he said. He had not seen Dingwall since the year of his accident. But he was all right, and had been doing some good climbs from Zermatt. He had a new guide. Poor old Zurbriggen! He had been killed with the rest on the Dent Blanche, and had Calthorpe a match about him?

Calthorpe had a match about him, and it was enough for the immediate requirements of Mr. Garnett, who lighted his cigar and made an inquiry for Lady Calthorpe. Sir Everard pointed with a somewhat derisive thumb in the direction of Mrs. Sampson's circle.

"Oh!" remarked Arthur. "Still harping on Mrs. Holmes, I suppose. How far has she got? Is it the story of the Matterhorn sleeping-hut, or the story of the dress that was found in the guide's knapsack? Ah, yes; I hear now. I think some one should provide her with another and a better tale. That sleeping-hut should have its foundations strengthened and get a new corrugated zinc roof. Who is the bluff bounder making a demonstration in the corner?"

Sir Everard had no notion of the identity of the bluff bounder; and if he had heard the name of the objectionable person it would have conveyed nothing to him;

he was one of the many people who had never seen it on the publications which it adorned. The bluff bounder, talking loud and with overbearing emphasis, made himself so objectionable that some people thought him a genius. He had blustered through various beliefs, political as well as social, and the only belief from which he never diverged was his belief in himself. He had slouched his way through what he called Socialism, and had bludgeoned a path for himself through some affiliated forms of Democracy. Just now he was attesting to the accuracy of the man who had alluded to him as an impudent Imperialist. He was a bluff, hearty, breezy bounder, who made a boast of his poverty and shook hands with peers to whom he had never been introduced, just for fear that they might think that he meant to overlook them.

"I can't stand this," said Sir Everard. "He is telling them that he knew the woman that Cecil Rhodes was in love with. That might be all very well; but her language . . . Let us get a little nearer to the open air."

They went down to the chairs which were close to the rails of the verandah. The voice of the objectionable person ceased to grate upon their ears. They were even fortunate enough to be out of hearing of Mrs. Sampson.

"Beyond these voices," said Sir Everard, "we have not even the goat-bells of Stalden to worry us. We may expect to hear the merry village chime before sunrise, and the merry village chime in this part of the world is singularly like the beating of tin trays round the orchard at the time of the swarming of bees; but it is a long time before dawn, and there should be plenty of silence to enjoy in the meantime."

They sat there scarcely exchanging a word. The silence became majestic when Mrs. Sampson and some of her circle went indoors. The stars were glowing in the hollows between the ridges of the peaks; but there was a subtle suggestion of moonlight upon the mountains on the western side of the valley, although the moon had not yet appeared. It was past her rising time, but it took her a full hour climbing up behind the ridge of the Plattje, and the twin peaks of the Dom were glistening under the faint silvery blue of the sky before the golden sphere was revealed by one of the gaps in the opposite ridge, and the wonder of Alpine moonlight flooded the silver basin, and overflowed through every chasm that cleft the billowy slopes of the valley. The thousand torrents that came from the tumbled terraces of the glacier before their eyes were becoming iridescent, and the little river that washed the feet of the eastern slopes, wooded with pines, became a satin sash. The irregular pine-woods must have been silvered on the side that was next the slopes, but seen from afar they were like a shaggy mantle of fur flung upon the white nakedness of the mountains.

At rare intervals the silence of the moonlight was shattered by the sound of the slipping of a snow avalanche at the side of the glacier. Now and again the squeal of a marmot quivered from the herbage around the crags of the valley.

And then the moon, which had risen from the depths of a hollow of the Plattje ridge, and was creeping slowly upward toward the Mittaghorn, became eclipsed by the nearest peak, and the valley was disconsolate. Only the western range rejoiced, its highest snow-fields glistening

while sending their message from summit to summit of returning light.

When the moon reappeared Olive was sitting by the side of Arthur Garnett, close to the low wall of the small plateau in front of the hotel. They were alone. A short time before a professional poet had come close to their seat on the verandah, and had begun to rhapsodise in an Irish accent to two young women who sat at his feet. He quoted Marston incorrectly, and then he remembered that he had himself written in praise of moonlight. . . . Sir Everard fled, with as much precipitancy as politeness permitted. Olive and Arthur followed him down the steps, and they had strolled across the plateau to the eastern wall. Half an hour later he had left them in order to intercept a guide who was crossing to the village.

"You have your eyes fixed on the snow causeway," said he, when they were alone.

She gave a little laugh.

"I was thinking that if they are to be seen at all they will be seen on the causeway to-night," said she.

"And if they are to be seen by mortal eyes they will be seen by yours," he said. "Have you seen anything whiter than the moonlit snow?"

She shook her head.

"I think that this is the sort of night that would tempt the spirits of the highest heaven to pay a visit to our world," she said. "But you assured me that there was no such causeway—it is a delusion."

"I have been thinking over the matter," he replied, "and I have come to the conclusion that this mystery of the mountains is a parable done in snow."

"A parable? With an interpretation? Have you found

out the interpretation? The interpretation of a snow parable should be writ in water."

"I have found out what is the White Causeway by which the soul of a man can have a glimpse of highest heaven. I have set my feet on that shining causeway, and already I am conscious of bliss unspeakable. Even if I should not be allowed to travel a further step toward the glory which is beyond, I shall still feel happy in the thought that I have set my feet and my face toward its achievement. Olive, I think that I have always loved you."

She turned her eyes upon him; she seemed to be waiting for him to explain something—to explain the connection between his first sentences and their inconsequent sequel. Was he still talking in parables? She looked at him in silence. What was there for her to say? He had asked her no question.

"Won't you say something to me?" he pleaded. "Won't you tell me that at least you believe that I love you now?"

She continued to look at him inquiringly, as if she did not quite realise what he had said. Then a sudden flash of light seemed to come upon her face. She gave a little gasp. He saw that she understood him. He waited for her to speak. It was not in his nature to fill up the silence with a passion of protestation. It was not in his nature to become eloquent on the subject of his loving her. He knew that she was not the sort of girl to be impressed by a torrent of the phrases that men have been speaking to women since the first man became conscious of his love. He knew Olive Austin and he was silent.

At last she found words.

"You love me?" she said.

"I love you."

"And that is the causeway? You think that love is the causeway between earth and heaven—your love—our love?"

He almost flung himself on his knees at her feet—he could understand how the lover's posture, which he had always regarded as ridiculous, should be the result of a natural impulse. But he only caught her hand, and held it close to him.

"*Our* love—*our* love!" he said in a whisper. "Oh, my love—my sweet love! Oh, how is it possible? How is it possible that such a fellow as I am should——? But perhaps—dear love, you said '*our* love'—'*our* love'; it may be that I took up your words too quickly; 'our love'—that may bear the meaning of love—love generally, not merely that which is in our hearts—mine and yours—*yours!* Olive, is it in your heart—love for me—me?"

"I don't think that there is anything else in my heart," she said. "We were both thinking the same thing when we were looking out at that white mystery. Love is the White Causeway between earth and heaven, and our feet are treading it together—side by side, hand in hand—a beautiful pathway, chased silver, and shining in the silver moonlight; a silver way, laid with a carpet of white velvet."

"My darling—my beloved—I have no words to speak to you," he cried, and there was a sob in his throat that gave a certain huskiness to his utterance. "How is it possible—that is what I am wondering? How is it possible that you, being—being what you are—*you*—that you should have a thought——? But I suppose that is part of the mystery of love—it has been a mystery since the world began."

"We think together," she said, smiling. "When I saw

a look that came to your eyes once or twice—I remember the days and the hours—it was before we left home—a look that I had never seen in your face before—a sort of light it was—I wondered how it was possible that you—being you—could have a thought for me."

"Ah, how could any man who had eyes to see keep from loving you? I know now that I loved you the first time that we met—it was at the Calthorpes'. I knew it because I had never loved any girl until that moment. Heavens! to think that that happened a year ago! Why did I not tell you the next day that I loved you? It seems a year wasted. But I tell you that I thought it impossible that you should ever think of me as—as you think now. I tell you that I was afraid. I have always laughed at the notion of falling in love. I was always suspicious—I had a horror of tumbling in love. But if I had missed you—good heavens! if I had missed you! The thought is a horror to me. After all, I did not fall in love with you: I have been in love with you all my life. I was always waiting for you to appear. When you did appear I recognised you—that's all. I felt, 'This is the one for whom I have been waiting all my life.' I was not such a fool as to refuse to wait, my Olive!"

He had gone very close to her while he was speaking. He could feel the entrancing warmth of her breathing. The soft breath of her lips was warm on his face as a July air that has blown through a garden of roses—roses. He would have liked to take her into his arms, tasting the roses of the garden with his own lips, but that was impossible: they were standing in the moonlight, not a hundred feet away from the verandah. All that was left for him was to stand close to her in silence. They could

hear each other breathe. The crystal air around them was full of the music of many harps, music heard by love alone. Love had taken them into his garden of music, and they were breathing of the musk-rose scents that hover warm and luscious in its air, and drinking deep of the ethereal melody made by love's lutes, which are the hearts of lovers. Heart was singing unto heart—the air was vibrant with the music of pure passion.

They were silent. They could only stand close together —breathing, listening, wondering at the mystery which had come into their lives.

Voices sounded behind them. A party of climbers were crossing the terrace to the hotel steps. Two men were in front, and two guides were following. When abreast of where Arthur Garnett and Olive were standing, one of the men spoke a word to his companion and then hastened from him to them—they were not a dozen yards away.

"So you have arrived," he said. "We were expecting you. Sorry I couldn't be here to welcome you, Olive, but the chap I was climbing with couldn't wait another day. We were on the Südlenzspitz—maybe you heard of it?"

"Heard of it?" cried Olive. "My dear Chris, I have been watching for you for hours up there. My heart was in my mouth every time you made a false step."

"Oh, the telescope," laughed Christy Carew. "I wish that some one would shy the beastly thing into the river. I expect that the next thing that the hotels will get is a Marconi receiver, to hear all that we say on the mountains."

"I am not sure that that would be popular: a parson

might put his ear to it," said Arthur. "Had you a good day? You took your time over the old Südlenzspitz."

"Oh, the old Südlen is good enough for exercise," said Christy. "We delayed at the hut for the fun of coming back in the moonlight. I'm a bit hungry now. I hope we'll be able to get something to eat. I suppose every one is in bed as usual: it must be nearly ten. Any other new arrivals, Garnett?"

"I had no idea it was so late," said Arthur. "We were driven off the terrace by some chap quoting poetry."

"My aunt! the idea of any one quoting poetry on a lovely night like this!" said Mr. Carew. "And pray what do you think of the Alps, Miss Austin? You have been examining them through a telescope for half an hour or more, so you should be able to write an Alpine novel. They are a bit conspicuous, are they not, when you get close to them, or bring them close to you by a telescope's assistance? Marvellous strides science is making nowadays. Have you seen the Dom? No? That's the Dom up there. Don't you forget it."

"And that's the Mittaghorn," laughed Olive. They were mounting the hotel steps, so she had only to point to the right.

"Lorramercy! If you go on at this rate, people will confuse you with Mrs. Sampson," said Christy.

"Good-night," cried Olive, with her foot on the first step of the hotel stairs. "I did not know that people went to bed so early here. Good-night, Mr. Garnett."

"Good-night," said Garnett. "May you walk upon the White Causeway in your dreams."

"My feet are already upon it," said she. "A dream causeway—a dream within a dream. Good-night."

"You have got to the chapter on 'Legends and Folk-lore of the Fée Valley,'" said Christy Carew, going to the *salle à manger*. "You lost no time."

"Not a minute," said Arthur.

CHAPTER IV

OF course, it was Lady Calthorpe who had originally seen great possibilities in the bringing together of Mr. Arthur Garnett and Olive Austin. It certainly was not Sir Everard who had foreseen the likelihood of Garnett's being specially attracted to the girl, attractive though she undoubtedly was. Even so clever a woman as Lady Calthorpe could not refrain from telling her husband in what direction her hopes lay, when they had brought about the meeting between the two: she reflected, after the manner of so many women, that if she were to refrain from telling her husband that she fully expected that Arthur Garnett would fall in love with Olive Austin, she would have difficulty, when the incident should occur, in substantiating her claim to have acted the part of a beneficent providence.

She had confided in her husband at the outset; but after the manner of his sex, which is the unimaginative and the selfish in matrimonial enterprises, he had pursed out his lips and assumed the expression of the artist's model of the man who says "Pooh, pooh!" He had not spoken a word, but Lady Calthorpe knew that he was thinking it. She knew what his arguments would be if she were to condescend to discuss the situation with him. She did not condescend to discuss it with him; but she

ventured to tell him what his arguments would be, should she give him an opportunity to say what he thought on the matter.

"Oh, I know perfectly well that you will tell me that Arthur Garnett is not a marrying man," she said. "A man who has reached the age of thirty and is thoroughly satisfied with his cook is what you call 'not a marrying man.' Psha! Every man is a marrying man, just as every woman is a mother at heart."

"A man who is thoroughly satisfied with his cook is the most marrying man in the world; he is certain to marry—his cook," remarked Sir Everard, who took an interest in definitions of the abstract, if he was deficient in his desire to be surrounded only by married people.

"That's it; I would save Arthur Garnett from his cook," said Lady Calthorpe, triumphantly. "Now, I know that you are going to tell me that Arthur Garnett would be afraid of her father. I admit that Mr. Austin would be a terror to most suitors—I am pretty nearly sure that Reggie Trafford took the father too much to heart; but Arthur is a very different sort of man. He will not be terrorised by that old reprobate, nor will he pay a penny of his debts. He is not a fool."

"And yet you expect him to jump into matrimony?"

"No, not jump—slide, if you like; slide—that's not quite my word. Make it simpler; say move—move toward matrimony. Arthur will make this very simple move, if he is only let alone."

"Mind that, and leave him alone. I hope that he will live to bless the day that he met you—and her."

Lady Calthorpe had laughed quite pleasantly at that time. She knew more than Solomon of the way of a

man with a maid; she could not see that there was anything so wonderful about it that a sage should shrink from a consideration of it in all its bearings. And her sagacity led her into the way of knowing that the man should be let alone by such as wish him well on his way.

By judiciously letting him alone, Arthur Garnett had, she could see, become greatly attracted to Olive before the end of the first week that they spent together under the capacious roof of Calthorpe Place. She hoped that Olive would respond—the response of the magnet to the steel. A thin thread of science ran through the education of Lady Calthorpe; and she knew that in all forms of attraction the thing that attracts moves some distance to meet the object upon which it exercises its influence. In gravity the earth moves to meet the apple which is drawn toward it. In magnetism the magnet moves to meet the steel.

Well, she was on the side of Kepler, though she lacked his succinctness of definition; and she hoped that Olive would be not merely attractive, but responsive.

That had been a year ago, and she had been most painstaking in leaving them alone. She knew that they had met several times during the winter, the spring, and the summer; and then it was that Arthur had come to her and asked her if she did not think it would be a good thing to ask Miss Austin to spend a month or two in Switzerland with her. That was encouraging to Lady Calthorpe. She had given Olive the invitation, and had only mentioned casually that there was a possibility of Mr. Garnett's turning up at Lausanne before they should go on to Saas Fée.

This possibility had been realised. They had walked

through the valley together from Stalden to Fée, and Lady Calthorpe had noticed a certain exhilaration about Olive's tread even on the worst parts of the road. These were the times when she and Arthur had fallen some little distance behind the mules. When night came, with that marvellous moonlight, Lady Calthorpe had endured Mrs. Sampson's story rather than run the chance of being a third in the party of which Arthur and Olive were the other two. Marriages are no doubt made in heaven, but opportunity is of the earth. She commended her husband for his discretion in intercepting that guide just when the *mise en scène* demanded a duet. Sir Everard felt that he had been artistic without knowing it.

She was greatly interested in the characters taking part in that duet in the moonlight with the imposing background of mountains. The good woman had actually a feeling that those heights, those eternal snows, and that glory of moonlight had been arranged into one harmonious scene in order that Arthur Garnett and Olive Austin might make a match of it.

But she never pried upon them. She only looked hard at Olive the next morning and waited. She was only slightly disappointed when Olive seemed to have nothing to confide to her. She was not despondent. Perhaps the girl was a little too much in sympathy with the glacial elements of her background. There sometimes came to her eyes a look of dreamy abstraction that a lover might think chilling—for lovers like to be met with a glow.

But Lady Calthorpe was not despondent. She would wait—the moon was not yet at the full.

That day they went out together—Sir Everard, Lady Calthorpe, Olive, and Arthur—to the Fée Glacier—the

glacier of the neophyte, corresponding to the Shetland pony of the hunting field. A practice at the nets, Christy Carew termed it. But the Fée Glacier really is to the Alps what the swimming-bath is to the open sea. Olive climbed up by the steps cut by Arthur, and when she had been on the ice for an hour, proved that she had a good Alpine head and most satisfactory respiration. Crossing the ice-hummocks, Sir Everard made a circuit to ascertain the best place for their descent, and the moment that he was hidden by the great cliff, Arthur took Olive by the hand and led her to where Lady Calthorpe was seated on an ice chair.

"Kneel, my child, kneel with me, and implore the blessing of our kind patroness upon your rashness."

Olive, blushing rose-red, threw herself into Lady Calthorpe's arms, thereby imperilling her equilibrium on her very unsteady seat, and kissed her on the face.

"What—what is this? What is the meaning of this demonstration? Rashness?—rashness? What is the rash act?" cried Lady Calthorpe, overwhelmed with delight at the result of her own policy of leaving people alone.

"There is only one rashness that a girl can be guilty of," said Arthur. "Listening to the voice of a man who tells her that he loves her. She is guilty, and implores your blessing."

Lady Calthorpe played the part of the amazed lady very prettily indeed. Of course, she was amazed. The thing had come over her as a thunderclap—perhaps she should say an avalanche. Who would ever have thought that such a thing was in the air? Some one really should invent an instrument,—something like a barometer, or the instrument that foretold an earthquake—a seismometer, she believed

was the name of it,—to let a person know when there was going to be a disturbance of the sort hinted at by Mr. Garnett. Why shouldn't there be a lover's aneroid, she inquired, to break the shock of such a revelation?

But as soon as she had recovered from the first shock of her surprise, she kissed Olive and gave Arthur her hand to kiss, which he did devoutly—so devoutly that Sir Everard, returning from his exploration, said:

"Hallo! what tomfoolery is this?"

"My dear, come here quickly," cried his wife. "Prepare for a great surprise."

"I am always prepared; I have been a husband for nine years," he said.

"But this—oh, you will be surprised," said his wife.

"What, is Garnett going away without asking Olive to marry him?" cried Sir Everard.

"No," said Arthur. "Whatever the fuss may be about, it certainly is not that."

"Give me your hand, my friend," said Sir Everard. "Olive, kiss me on the cheek. May you be happy. Marriage is this," he held up the red coils of the Alpine rope, which a short time before had tied them together. "It is the rope that binds two climbers together, and makes the safety of both assured."

"I don't want a better definition," said Arthur. "I was afraid that you were going to say that marriage meant climbing the Matterhorn daily."

"But what a surprise the whole thing is!" said Lady Calthorpe.

"So it is—so it is indeed," said her husband. "Good heavens! who could imagine that a whole year has gone by since you assured me that it was inevitable that

Garnett and Olive should make a match of it! How time passes!"

Lady Calthorpe jumped up from her seat with a laugh.

"Yes," she said, "I knew that if I left you alone you would find out in what direction your happiness lay."

"And we have found it," said Arthur, with some solemnity.

That evening, just after sunset, when there was still a suggestion of pink in the air, Olive saw Arthur leaning over the rail of the little bridge that crosses the foaming, glacier-fed river. She went to him before he had left the planks. There was a flush on her face and a certain tremulous eagerness in her voice as she said:

"My dearest, I have seen them."

"Them? Whom have you seen, my Olive?"

"The shapes on the White Causeway. I was standing on my balcony watching the effect of the sunset upon the few peaks that it reached. I looked at the causeway and I saw them."

He gazed at her for some moments, a man's incredulity upon his face. Then he glanced in the direction of the causeway.

"But it has been too dim for the past hour for you even to see the outline of the causeway—the imaginary causeway," he said. "The sun sets behind the mountains quite early in the afternoon."

"Oh, yes; when I looked it was quite dim and mysterious, but I could see the causeway. It seemed to me that there was a light upon it—a faint light, like the pale

shimmer of starlight; it was like the snow reflecting the light from the shapes that moved over it."

"But, my dear Olive, even in the daylight you could not make out any shape upon the causeway—even if the causeway existed. A party of climbers might appear upon it, if they stood together, but only as a speck."

"I daresay that is so: but what I saw was more than a speck—white figures, and they did not seem to be far away; they seemed to be on the causeway, and the causeway seemed to be quite close. I suppose it was some glamour of the snow; but I can assure you that I saw the movement of figures."

"It was, as you say, a—a sort of snow mirage. Some things of the same character have been seen under peculiar conditions of the atmosphere in these mountains and others. The snow produces curious effects. One should not look at it for too long. If any figures were upon that causeway they would have to be a hundred feet high to allow of your seeing them. By the way, I did not tell you that it is part of this legend, as well as of every other of the same type, that for one to see them is a presage of calamity. That deduction follows every mysterious appearance, from that of the Flying Dutchman to the Irish banshee."

She laughed.

"There are calamities and calamities," she said. "It may rain to-morrow and so spoil the pleasure of your climb of the Mittaghorn. That would be one calamity. Or the soup may be burnt at dinner to-night—that would be another. We may have to face a calamity of some degree any minute."

"A stranger may put his head out from among the pines

before I can kiss you," he whispered, with his arm about her and his face close to hers.

But no head appeared.

It was not to be a long climb on the Mittaghorn the next day. They took only one guide with them, though they would have had two if Sir Everard had not at the last moment changed his mind about going. Olive was aware of a muffled sound on the stairs in the early morning —the kind of noise that is made by the man who is anxious to avoid making a noise—and was quickly alert. Arthur and Christy had had some words the night before as to the hour at which they should start, and she was sure that they both were creeping stealthily downstairs to drink their chocolate with their knapsacks beside them, their loins girded (in modern adaptation), and their ice-axes in their hands.

She jumped out of bed in the darkness and went to her window, drawing back the blind in order to see them depart. She stood there, a slender figure of white, with a flowing darkness that draped her shoulders falling from her head, and saw the guide waiting, in the mingling of moonlight and the first delicate dawn-light, at the foot of the hotel steps. She remained at the window for some minutes before either of the climbers appeared; but at last Arthur showed himself, and he was quickly followed by Christy. She saw them talking to the guide and making a distribution of the knapsacks, and then they tramped off across the terrace. She noticed that their shadows were due to the moonlight; the dawn was still feeble in the contest of the lights for mastery. She cleared from the window-pane the faint dimness made by her breath, and she was able

to watch them trudging along the path and then turning off to the left, where they became indistinct and in a few minutes indistinguishable.

When she got into her bed once more she found that it had not yet become cold. It was still warm with the warmth it had gained from her hours of sleep. And now she had a thought to comfort her still further.

It was a very long day that she had to spend, and she passed most of it on the verandah writing letters. She had a long letter to write to her father. And every time that she paused to consider a sentence, her eyes turned toward the Mittaghorn, though she had been told that it would be impossible for her to catch a glimpse of any one climbing the mountain. Still, the mountain was there, and she felt some consolation in watching it: it had a look of immortality about it; the everlasting hills were one of the brotherhood of immortals—the sea, the mountains, and love.

Of course, other parties of climbers went forth from the hotel during the day—the man who bounded on title-pages went off with the man who bounded to the sound of creaking pig's-skin—they did not succeed in attracting her attention, and they were fortunate, though they did not know it. They were convinced that she was an unusually careless girl; she had lost an opportunity. No one was anything to her to-day; but the mountain on her left hand was everything.

When twelve hours had passed she began to take an interest in the incidents of the life around her, especially the returning of climbing parties, though these were disappointing in their component details. With the eclipsing of the sun by the western ridges she became uneasy,

and once during dinner she whispered of a possible accident.

Sir Everard laughed—not heartlessly, but consolingly.

"My dear girl, you will soon get used to the irregularities of mountaineers," said he. "They go on and on when they are blessed with favourable weather, and when they sit down to eat the delicacies which they have brought with them, they get lazy and refuse to listen to the guide, who is thinking of the kid stew awaiting him in his village. You'll find that those two desperadoes on the Mittaghorn will turn up in good time to make an excellent supper."

After dinner she sat shivering on the verandah for a couple of hours, looking eagerly up when some one was crossing the terrace below. She noticed that Sir Everard had strolled away and was talking with those of the guides who were lounging with their pipes at the entrance to the village street. He returned after a rather prolonged chat —or was it a consultation?—and remarked:

"The guides think they must have been tempted to go farther than they had intended, and will probably come down by another path, strolling on here in the moonlight. I don't think that we should bother ourselves waiting up for them. They are sure to be all right. They are first-class chaps on a mountain, and they know every bit of the Mittaghorn."

"Oh, of course they are all right," said Lady Calthorpe, with such impressive confidence as convinced Olive that she had become uneasy.

Olive said nothing. She shivered and waited.

After another hour no one but Lady Calthorpe and Olive was left on the verandah. Sir Everard had gone

across the terrace once more to the guides. He returned in a leisurely way, and stood at the head of the steps humming a tune.

"What, are you still there?" he cried, turning to his wife and her companion. "Look here, this sort of thing will not do, you know. Off to bed with you both. I am dog-tired, I suppose because I have done nothing to-day; and I think after such a day of unbroken idleness, I deserve a good sleep."

"Dear me! every one else has gone. Come along, Olive, we must not demoralise the virtuous Saas Fée by keeping late hours."

Lady Calthorpe rose from her chair with a yawn, trying to conceal her anxiety by commonplaceness.

Olive rose without a word, and said good-night to Sir Everard and went to her room.

She stood there in the darkness when she had shut the door. She felt that the worst that could happen had already happened. The presage of the White Causeway had been realised. Arthur had said to her that the tradition of the causeway was that a calamity followed the seeing of the figures upon it. She had seen them, and the calamity had come upon her. She had a sense of being herself responsible for the calamity, because she had seen the shadowy shapes in the twilight.

She threw herself on her knees by her bedside and prayed that the disaster might be averted—that Arthur Garnett might be spared. She actually prayed also that she might be forgiven for having seen the figures that had been the presage of calamity.

It was impossible for her to go to bed. Putting a dressing-gown about her she went to her window and

looked out into the moonlight, just as she had done in the early morning. The moon had travelled through the depths of the underworld in the meantime. Then it had been far down the western slope; now it was in the east.

And that was the last time that she had seen him—when he had come into that exquisite mingling of moonlight and dawnlight; that was the last time that she had seen him. It seemed months ago.

And she was never to see him again. That was her thought. Never again—never again.

Still looking out, she saw some one running across the terrace toward the village, and she recognised Sir Everard Calthorpe. He was joined by a guide with a coil of rope, and both disappeared among the line of châlets. She knew that Sir Everard was going with guides in search of the missing party; and when Sir Everard, naturally the cheeriest and most optimistic of men, thought it necessary to do so, the worst only could be anticipated.

She could not leave the window. If she should have to wait for hours for the return of the search-party she would not move from her place.

But she had not been there for many minutes before she saw a man coming slowly from the direction of the little bridge to the eastward of the hotel. He came very slowly, and went wearily up the steps. He did not seem to know the place, for he looked from one side of the hotel to the other. Then she heard the bell ringing.

She ran to her room door, opened it, and went on tip-toe to the stairs. She descended to the first lobby, and then leant over the banisters and heard the porter unfastening the front door of the hotel. She heard the visitor enter and walk into the hall. She heard him say:

"Was it from this hotel that a party set out for the Mittaghorn in the morning? Well, there has been a bad accident. Some one is killed, if not all. Yes, I believe that they are all killed. I am done out. I hurried down with the news and to send up guides and a surgeon. I suppose there is a surgeon somewhere about.'

CHAPTER V

OLIVE heard all that the stranger said. His words sounded hollowly from the silent hall—unreal as the words in which a physician tells us that we have contracted a mortal malady. So must sound the words of the death sentence in the ears of a man who has just been tried for his life.

She grasped the banister rail to save herself from falling, but she did not quite succeed in saving herself. She swayed to and fro for a few moments, and then her hands seemed to lose all power, her limbs became limp. She was barely conscious of hearing a cry from the corridor above her. She raised her eyes, and saw Lady Calthorpe flying toward her, and it was into Lady Calthorpe's arms that she fell.

But she had not become unconscious, although her eyes were closed, and Lady Calthorpe had the best of reasons for knowing that if her hands had been powerless before they were certainly not so now. The girl was holding her arm with both her hands—clinging to her arm passionately, as if her life depended on her maintaining her grasp.

"My poor child! my poor child!" said Lady Calthorpe. "You are overstrung. You should not have left your room. You must be strong. Let me help you to go back. You will be strong if you make an effort."

In an instant Olive had dropped the arm to which she had been clinging. The suddenness of the action startled Lady Calthorpe; she waited with her arms slightly outstretched, so as to receive the girl when she would fall back—Lady Calthorpe was certain that she would fall back in another moment. But Olive remained standing erect, her eyes staring curiously at a blank space on the wall illuminated by a corridor lamp. An instant had transformed her from a girl at the point of collapsing into something quite different. The expression on her face was one that Lady Calthorpe had never seen her wear. It was the expression of some one who is listening breathlessly to a voice speaking out of the distance. Lady Calthorpe, watching her, was frightened, she scarcely knew why. She was about to speak to her again, but at that moment Olive drew a long breath—a breath of great relief—and a smile moved upon her face with the inspiration.

"He is safe," she whispered in another moment. "The accident did not happen to him. Oh, the relief!"

"How do you know he is safe? The man who brought the message has gone into the *salle à manger*. Did he say anything to lead you to believe that Arthur Garnett is safe?" asked Lady Calthorpe.

"I have not heard him speak since he passed out of the hall. I only heard him speak once," said Olive. "I have been dreadfully frightened all the night, and when the man said that one of the party had been killed in the accident, perhaps all the party—he said that, did he not? —I was overwhelmed. I felt that such a disaster would be so like things that happen to send one's happiness crashing to the ground just when it is highest. Oh, the

relief! Do not think me heartless or unsympathetic, Editha. I know that something dreadful has happened, but Arthur is safe. I can only think that Arthur is safe. . . . I am selfish. How can we help them? Oh, I forgot that Sir Everard is gone to help them—I saw him cross the terrace to the guides."

Lady Calthorpe did not speak for some moments, and when she did, it was in the tone that a nurse assumes to soothe a child that is on the verge of delirium—the tone of the experienced person who is "humouring" an invalid.

"Yes, dear; it is indeed a great relief to know that Arthur is safe," she said. "And that being so, had you not better go back to bed, Olive? You can get a little sleep, and that will be good for you."

"I am not so selfish as to do that," said Olive. "How could I go to bed the moment that I knew Arthur was safe? That would be contemptible. Some one is hurt. The relief that I feel because it is not Arthur does not make me callous to the others. H'sh, some one is coming downstairs."

She stepped back to the wall. A man was coming quickly along the corridor. When he got within the sphere of influence of the lamp, Lady Calthorpe recognised Dr. Falkland, who had been on the Südlenzspitz with Christy Carew.

"Have you been roused too, Lady Calthorpe?" he asked. "Where is the man who brought the message? Has he given you any details? I should like to see Sir Everard. He would be certain to be able to advise me what to do. Did the porter arouse him also?"

"My husband left with a couple of guides a short time

ago. I cannot understand how he missed the man who brought the news. The man is in the *salle à manger* now," said Lady Calthorpe.

"Have you seen him? I suppose there can be no doubt about his news. But surely Garnett . . . and Carew was an expert climber," said Dr. Falkland. "But I must lose no time. In the *salle à manger*?"

He hurried down the stairs and was met by the porter, who had sent a message up to his room by the other staircase.

"Should I have told him that Arthur was safe?" whispered Olive to Lady Calthorpe.

"No, certainly not," said Lady Calthorpe. "Indeed, I think that you should go to bed, Olive."

"And you—what will you do?"

"I feel that I should go to the *salle à manger*."

"I shall go with you. Why should I not? Nothing that the man can tell will affect me. I see that you fancy his news may be too much for me. You will find that the accident happened to another party of climbers. Arthur and Chris are helping them."

She had already descended a step or two before Lady Calthorpe followed her, saying, half to herself, "My poor child!"

She could not understand the confidence with which Olive reiterated her belief that Arthur was safe. The girl spoke as if she had seen with her own eyes what had happened on the mountain.

The bearer of the news was telling his story to Dr. Falkland in the *salle à manger*. It appeared that he had been staying at the Almagell Hotel, and in the afternoon had gone for a walk of some miles through the wood and

on the road to the Moro Pass. When resting, and at the point of returning, he had been hailed by some one higher up the mountain. He found that this man was on his way down to Fée to send help to a party who had met with a bad accident; he had, however, been unfortunate enough to injure his knee-cap by making a false step on a loose stone.

"And so he asked me if I would mind hurrying on here for help," continued the narrator. "And here I am. I missed my way three times taking short cuts. I'm new to this sort of thing—never was on a worse mountain than Beachy Head in my life. I had often heard of the Alps, and so——"

"You did not get any particulars of the accident? The man who sent you on here did not give you any names?" Dr. Falkland inquired.

"Not a name. He only said that the party had left the hotel at Fée for the Matterhorn——"

"The Mittaghorn, it must have been," said Lady Calthorpe.

"I suppose so. The Matterhorn isn't just in this neighbourhood, is it? You see, I'm a stranger here. Beachy Head is a stiff enough climb, but——"

"You did not hear if any limbs were broken, or what?" asked the doctor.

"He said it was a very bad business. He rather thought that one man had been killed outright—perhaps both. I'm afraid that I'm not so clear as I might be, but I'm not used to climbing. I'm quite done out. After an hour's sleep——"

The man was interrupted this time by the sound of rather heavy footsteps in the hall—footsteps and voices.

Every one in the *salle* looked toward the door. The porter pushed it open, and Christy Carew hobbled into the room, followed by Sir Everard Calthorpe.

"Hallo! this is the gentleman who hurt his knee-cap and made me his messenger," said the stranger who had acknowledged that he was unused to mountaineering. "You managed almost to catch up on me, sir: I haven't been here more than a quarter of an hour. That hurry won't do your knee any good."

"I hope you didn't run any risk to your health by your hurry," said Christy, caustically.

"I don't know yet. I took three short cuts—short, as I thought, but——"

"Oh, of course you have heard that it was to another party the accident happened," said Sir Everard. "Garnett and Carew came upon them in great distress, and Carew volunteered to go for assistance. I met him just now hobbling over the bridge. He was surprised that the person whom he did come across on his way down the mountain had not arrived with the news hours ago. There was no need for me to go on. I hope that you were not very uneasy, Olive. You seem to have waited up. That was foolish—natural. But I told you that your Arthur was an expert on the mountains," continued Sir Everard, while Dr. Falkland was making Christy Carew utter subdued shrieks by something he was doing to his knee-cap, and the stranger who had shown himself to be so dilatory a messenger went on contrasting the opportunities available to the mountaineer by Beachy Head with those offered by the Mittaghorn. The porter was wrapping up the doctor's lint and splints and bottles into a handy parcel.

"We were in great distress for a few minutes—we

overheard the news which the Beachy Head mountaineer gave to the porter," said Lady Calthorpe to her husband.

"You were kneeling on the stairs with your heads between the banisters. I see you," cried Sir Everard.

"On the contrary, we were leaning over the rail," said she. "But in a moment Olive recovered herself and asserted that Arthur was safe."

Sir Everard turned his eyes upon the girl's face.

"That was very clever of Olive," said he. "You recollected that I had given you that assurance, my dear Olive?"

Olive paused and looked puzzled for a moment, and the little pucker on her forehead had not smoothed itself away before she said:

"Yes; I daresay that is how I came to be so sure about the matter."

"Though you had no recollection of it just at that moment," said he.

"We must look after poor Christy's knee," cried Olive, making a move to cross the room to where poor Christy was writhing on a settee.

"Poor yourself!" cried Christy, when he heard himself addressed in words of commiseration. "If you are sincerely sympathetic you will oblige me greatly if you turn Dr. Falkland out of the hotel. Was there ever such luck! The road was as flat as a billiard-table, except for the stones, which made it like Piccadilly when it's up—usually about June or July. I knew that the stone was loose, but I thought that I could humour it. Humour it! My aunt! There isn't much humour in having your knee-cap knocked off as clean as you knock the neck off a bottle when you haven't a corkscrew. And I thought it was so lucky of me

to manage to attract the attention of—of—— Oh, he has gone. Did you ever see such an incompetent? The poor devil was wandering about the slopes in search of short cuts for three hours at least—just the time that it took me to hobble here, resting every five minutes! Beachy Head! But I suppose he did his best. It only occurred to me at one of my rests that you might be uneasy," he continued, turning to Olive. "If I had had any kind of a head on my shoulders I should have scrawled a line to you, and sent it by the man to relieve your suspense."

"It was you yourself who relieved our suspense," said Lady Calthorpe.

"You brought us the good tidings, and your feet were beautiful upon the mountains, Chris," said Olive.

He pointed a derisive forefinger at his boots, which suggested a pair of pachyderms, ancient and armoured, embossed with the soil so dear to the class Pachydermata, wallowers in old river-beds.

Olive laughed, but only for a moment; then she became quite grave.

"You got your wound trying to help the others," she said.

"Yes, that's the worst of it," he growled. "I didn't get it doing a legitimate climb; there would be some satisfaction in it if it had happened to me in the ordinary day's work. As it is, it's like being run over by a coster's barrow after one has gone unscathed through a long and bloody campaign."

"It *was* by a coster's barrow that you were run over," remarked Sir Everard.

Thus the effect of an incident which at one time threatened the happiness of all the party, was frittered

away into the commonplace. So a thunderstorm that is terrifying in its imminence becomes ludicrous as the boom of an orchestral drum, in its decadence.

Lady Calthorpe yawned when Dr. Falkland had hurried from the hotel, and the Beachy Head mountaineer had gone to a distant table to be regaled with cold chicken and whisky.

"I hope no one is killed; hadn't you better get off to bed?" said Sir Everard.

"Oh, I hope that no one is killed; I am just going, dear," said his wife.

"I hope it is not heartless," suggested Olive, doubtfully.

She looked toward Chris. Chris was fast asleep with his chin well forward on his chest. Some heavy breathing was likely to follow.

"Poor Chris!" said Olive. Her voice was on tip-toe. She nodded to Sir Everard, and stole out of the room with Sir Everard's wife.

She did not awaken until late the next morning, and then it was with a heart free from care. But she soon became aware of an uneasy feeling that she had been thoughtless in sleeping so soundly as not to hear the sound of the return of Arthur to the hotel. She hoped that he had returned, and that she should hear that the men whom he had remained on the mountain to help were not grievously hurt.

On the verandah, after her cup of coffee, she heard the whole story of the accident. It was not a great catastrophe—only a case of a broken limb or two—scars in the annual Alpine campaign. Two men were climbing without a guide—without even a rope. One had slipped on the edge of a crevasse of no great depth, and had pulled his

companion over with him. Luckily there was a ledge. But they would both have perished through exposure if Garnett and Carew and their guide had not come upon them. When Christy had hurried off for additional help the two others—Garnett and his guide—had managed to hoist both the unfortunate men out of their perilous position, supplying them with brandy from their store. They were helping them down the mountain when the two guides sent by Sir Everard met them, and, later on, Dr. Falkland and another guide. The whole party of the rescued and rescuers had reached the hotel in the early dawn, and the fractured bones were reset.

It was not an accident for experienced mountaineers to talk about seriously; it was merely a journalist's disaster. Climbers wagged their heads and shrugged their shoulders. The peaks of the Dom and the ridges of the Südlenzspitz smiled coldly down. There was nothing to make a fuss about.

"And it seemed early in the night to be serious to us—terribly serious to you," said Lady Calthorpe to Olive. "It seemed to be a tragedy owing to the way that foolish man talked to the porter. But to be sure, he was dazed: he wanted to make the most of his adventure—it was an adventure to him."

"And he did not know that we were listening," said Olive.

"Quite so," acquiesced Lady Calthorpe. "But what I should like to know is this: How was it that one moment you were utterly overwhelmed—ready to fall into my arms; and then, in the twinkling of an eye, you were perfectly composed, assuring me that Arthur Garnett was safe?"

Olive seemed puzzled. She sent her eyes searching the hollows of the valley, and then round among the overhanging ridges and dazzling peaks, as if searching among their mysteries for a reply to her friend's inquiry. She did not seem to be successful in her search. She could only shake her head and say:

"I think something came to me—some assurance. It seemed like a voice—a strong whisper telling me that he was safe. No: I think I saw him standing on the side of the mountain; he was looking across the valley—I seemed to be at the other side; I could see that he was safe, you know. Does it really seem so remarkable to you?"

"Remarkable? Why, what could be stranger? I have never heard of anything so strange."

"It all seemed quite natural to me—as natural as—as—a dream. But it was not a dream."

"No, it was not a dream. People in health do not have dreams with their eyes open."

"What about poets?" said Olive, with a smile scampering over her face and leaving its footmarks—its vestiges—at the sweet corners of her mouth.

"Poets? Did I not say 'people in health'?" said Lady Calthorpe.

"Oh, never mind. I am not a poet."

"You are a healthy young girl, very much in love—that is the healthiest state for a girl to be in. I wonder if you have ever seen things before,—heard suggestions coming from—from outside yourself to give you assurance of—of things."

"I really cannot answer you," said Olive, after a pause. "There have been moments, when I have been intensely

excited about something—yes, I know that more than once when I was terribly uncertain about something, all of a sudden I seemed to get an assurance on the matter, as if I had seen it. But I thought that it was the same with every one. Surely every one must feel at times as I describe how I feel: I don't describe it very well—it is not very easy. . . . But I took it for granted. It is something like conscience. Has not every one a conscience?"

"Of course, we take a conscience for granted: it is best to take it for granted so far as some people are concerned. But conscience is a very different thing from the other: your conscience would not tell you whether a man was safe or lost."

"I didn't say that it was conscience that told me; only that it was something like conscience, and I took it for granted that it was as common. Do you really tell me, Editha, that you have never felt a secret assurance about something? Why, people give it a name to itself—premonition, is it not?"

Editha mused for a few moments; she appeared to think that there might be something in this view of the matter, but she was not sure. Just at that moment she stood greatly in need of an inward voice to tell her whether it was correct or otherwise.

"Of course, there is such a thing as premonition," she said. "Yes, I have known of people having curious presentiments—I have had them myself upon occasions, and it really turned out that I should have done well to act upon them. But I cannot say that I ever felt absolutely assured by such a feeling, and you were absolutely assured."

"I was absolutely assured; but that may have meant simply that I had more faith in my—my presentiment than you had in yours."

"There may be something in that," said Lady Calthorpe, doubtfully; but she felt more doubtfully than she spoke on this nice matter.

CHAPTER VI

IN another month they were at Lucerne. None of the party had had the least intention of going to Lucerne, but there was a controller of circumstances who compelled them to change their plans, and this potency was Olive's father.

Arthur Garnett, as well as Olive, had written to Mr. Austin, acquainting him with the understanding to which they had come, introducing the phrase "with your consent"—the phrase was a conventional one, and quite as grating as the word "engaged" to the ears of young men, who abhor conventionality as much as young women delight in it. But Arthur Garnett made a face and wrote it boldly. It looked even worse when written than it sounded when spoken. He could not believe that Olive would like to write it, it was so commonplace; but for that matter, one would have difficulty in convincing him that the actual ceremonial of marriage in the church—a thing that all men shrink from—is dear to the heart of even the nicest of young women. "*I trust that I shall be fortunate enough to obtain your consent,*" Arthur Garnett wrote in his room in the hotel at Saas Fée, and then paused to think of the man whose favour he was imploring.

Mr. Ambrose Austin was Olive's father. That was the last reflection that came to Arthur Garnett, and it wiped

out (he thought) all his other reflections on this prolific subject. Mr. Austin never reflected himself, but he gave rise to a large amount of reflection on the part of other people, and of this fact the man who "hoped to be fortunate enough" to obtain his consent to become his son-in-law was quite well aware.

People asked one another, referring to Mr. Austin:

"What's going to become of him, anyway?"

And the people to whom the question was put usually shook their heads by way of answer—by way of expressing the difficulty which they felt in saying with any degree of assurance what would be the ultimate fate of so erratic a person. It would be as easy to say what would become of a comet whirling into view and out of it before any astronomer could even get together his formulae for calculating its periods. Mr. Austin had a good deal in common with an uncalculated comet. He did a good deal of unestimated whirling; he startled most people and frightened the remainder. His career since he had committed his one act of prudence—leaving the army before he was compelled to send in his papers—had been full of light and shade, and people shook their heads quite as severely in referring to the one as in referring—however vaguely—to the other. His career was episodical, and therefore it did not lend itself to criticism as an entity. But it was quite possible to criticise its various episodes, and the result of such analysis was to cause many heads to shake.

He complained that he never got a chance—that he never could keep anything secret. Other men had luck; they were never found out: but somehow the third act of his little dramas got to be known and talked about

before the curtain had fallen upon the second. What annoyed him most in this was that sometimes the comedy got so talked about that he was compelled to cut out the third act; the curtain was rung down, owing to the immature criticisms of the spectators—sometimes the heroine's father or brother interfered—of the first and second acts.

But otherwise he saw no great reason to complain of life. His ambition was not to be on terms of intimate friendship with bishops, so he was not greatly put out when he found that the head of the diocese in which his property was situated, refrained from inviting him to The Palace. It would be wrong to say that the bishop habitually neglected him; upon an occasion, when a particular episode of Mr. Austin's episodical career found its way into a London paper, the bishop preached a sermon in the course of which Mr. Austin was not treated with any studied neglect. But Mr. Austin was too good-humoured to take to heart the prelate's pulpit attentions, any more than he did his social neglect. He appeared, trim and tolerant as usual, on the box-seat of his coach in the park, or coated like a wolf at the steering-wheel of his motor on the road between Nice and Monte Carlo.

And people shook their heads—even at Monte Carlo there are people who keep up appearances by shaking their heads over the doings of other people.

It seemed that Olive was the only person in Europe who was unacquainted with the chiaro-oscuro of her father's life. And this was all the more strange, seeing that he had really taken only the smallest amount of trouble to conceal anything from her. She had been at school in Paris—a school which was in Paris but not of Paris, a

school as select as any to be found in Eastbourne—and she had come to her home in Warwickshire in due course; and when she found that there were several people of some social distinction in the neighbourhood who omitted to call upon her or to send her invitations to their houses, she never supposed that they meant to slight her. She found several very good friends, including the Calthorpes and Mrs. Carew, Christy Carew's mother. General Carew knew all about Mr. Austin,—well, not exactly all—nobody knew all, not even Mr. Austin himself—but having lived in the world for several years, he did not mind being intimate with men who had episodes in their lives, and he encouraged his wife to "take up" Olive, and his wife had never regretted yielding to his encouragement. With these friends and a few others Olive was quite satisfied.

But this fact did not prevent Arthur Garnett's thinking a great deal about Mr. Austin when he had written his letter to him, mentioning certain facts and introducing the phrase about his kind consent.

In the course of a week or so—Mr. Austin was sojourning during the month of August at Ostend, and he was never a very scrupulous correspondent—Arthur got a reply to his letter; by no means an enthusiastic reply. Mr. Austin expressed himself as greatly astonished at the nature of his dear Garnett's communication. He had never thought of his little girl as anything more than a child. He did not think that early marriages were always happy, and Olive was still very young. He hoped that Garnett would excuse his giving his consent to the engagement until they had a chance of talking it over together. Marriage is a serious thing, much more serious than Garnett seemed to imagine, and so forth. With a view

to having this talk together Mr. Austin suggested their meeting at Lucerne in September. He did not care much for Ostend after August, and his medical man had said something about a fortnight at Homburg. But he must have a rest before facing the duties of the winter, so he meant to spend at least a week at Lucerne.

Arthur read his letter, and then showed it to the Calthorpes. They agreed with him that there was nothing for it but to return to England by way of Lucerne. Sir Everard did not believe that any one in Switzerland could say how to get to Lucerne from Saas Fée, but he felt sure that the thing could be worked out by patience and a knowledge of the lower mathematics—the mathematics that had to do with railway time-tables.

But for another fortnight they had no need to leave Fée, except for the day or two that they went to Zermatt, and the day or two that they spent in the Oberland. In spite of the coldness of her father's letter, and the suspension of his consent to the prayer of Arthur's communication, Arthur had no qualms in adopting toward Olive the attitude of the accepted lover. The mountains were cold, but the climbers were not frigid. It did not seem to occur to either of them that it would be well to suspend their love-making while Mr. Austin suspended his consent. They refused to take him seriously. The idea that any influence on earth could come between them and their love was preposterous. And so long as two people make this the basis of their life, their life is pleasant enough.

The lovers looked forward to Lucerne with light hearts; but Sir Everard Calthorpe and his wife were scarcely so buoyant at the prospect of having Mr. Austin added to their circle. Sir Everard could not bear Mr. Austin;

Lady Calthorpe thought him odious, and would have gone far to avoid meeting him. She expressed herself to this effect to her husband on the eve of their departure from Fée; but he recalled to her the full extent of her liabilities, and assured her that a compromise was impossible.

"It has been the aim of your life for the past year to see this pair mated," said he. "You went about the business with the air of a general conducting a campaign, and now that you have achieved your aim you will not be allowed to avoid any of the responsibilities that it entails. All that I can do is to wish you luck when you have your interview—an interview is inevitable—with the girl's father."

"Why should I have an interview with him?" Lady Calthorpe inquired.

"Because you were acting *in loco parentis* to his child when this thing happened," her husband replied. "You accepted the responsibility of protecting her, and yet——"

"You speak as if there was some chance of the father's refusing his consent to his daughter's engagement to a man of good family and with ten thousand a year."

"And a house and grounds in good repair, my Editha. That man Austin never did a sensible thing in his life, and do you fancy that he is about to begin now that he is fifty-seven?"

"I am perfectly certain that he will not show himself to be a fool, when it would be so greatly to his own interest to marry his daughter to so eligible a man as Arthur Garnett."

"H'm," remarked Sir Everard.

And now, here they were at the Hôtel National in a

delightful drawing-room overlooking the lake to the left, with the snowy Mont Pilatus in front of them, and Mr. Austin had acted in accordance with the traditions of his life, testifying to Sir Everard Calthorpe's knowledge of men by making a fool of himself. He had refused to give his consent to the engagement of his daughter to Arthur Garnett.

He had made a fool of himself in the most courteous way to all who had an interest in the transaction.

"I have given your proposition the most earnest thought, my dear Garnett," he said, in the course of his interview with Arthur, "but I regret that I cannot come to a satisfactory conclusion on the subject. Mind, I don't absolutely and definitely refuse to entertain the idea of your marrying my daughter; I only refuse to grant my immediate consent, and I do so only because I am not perfectly satisfied that I should be doing the best for my child in marrying her to you. Oh, no; I have nothing against you: don't run away with the notion that I have anything against you. I only say that I do not know enough of you personally to enable me to say with a clear conscience, 'This is the man to make my little girl happy.' Give me a chance of knowing you better, my dear boy, and I have no doubt that I shall see my way clearly. Of course, you are both eager to be married—you are both quite sure; that is one of the delightful delusions that are woven out of the glamour of love. Oh, no; not always delusions—certainly not; but still . . . . Garnett, she is my only child—the only one alive who has any sincere regard for me. I am not at all anxious to see her married. Her happiness? Ah, that is the point, my dear Garnett; her happiness—that is what I hope for—all that I hope

for in the world. Oh, yes; I do not doubt that you hope for it too. If I had a doubt on this point I would send you about your business without a moment's delay; but, mark me, I don't do that: all that I do is to—to—well, let us say, postpone—I trust that I may say *postpone*—postpone my decision on the gravest question I have had to consider in all my life."

He had not made a speech; he allowed Garnett to interpose half a dozen times with a sentence expressive of his disappointment, or of his acquiescence in a sentiment formulated by the man who was posing as the Affectionate Father. In fact, nothing could be more courteous or plausible or unsatisfactory than the way he waved Garnett's proposition to one side. But when he rose, as the cabinet minister rises to intimate to the deputation which has been waiting on him that the interview is at an end, Arthur Garnett felt that he had wasted his time in zigzagging across Switzerland in order to comply with a whim of Mr. Austin. He felt that he had been made a fool of, and he was naturally very angry, as well as greatly surprised, for he was not accustomed to be made a fool of. The man who has never been in love has safeguarded himself to a certain extent in this respect. But the moment that he finds himself in love he must be prepared for anything—for the extremes of humiliation as well as of exultation.

Of course, Lady Calthorpe was furious, and said in her haste a good deal that she should have left other people to say; something about getting the better of that horrid old man—when women are hasty they call a well-preserved man of fifty-seven old—and marrying the girl without his leave. But Sir Everard, having been in

the Diplomatic Service, and thus having learned to sympathise with the rascality of mankind, smiled the smile of the under-secretary, and said :

"That is very good for a beginning, Garnett. Surely you did not expect anything more satisfactory from Mr. Austin at a first interview."

"I certainly did expect something more satisfactory," said Garnett. "I may not be just the sort of chap that the average father would regard as an ideal *parti*, but——"

"My dear chap, you can't expect to have things all your own way from the outset," said Sir Everard. "Austin's methods are strictly diplomatic. He starts off by defining his position, and if you were to accept his definition of it, you would at once admit that it is impregnable, and take the next train home. I really don't know, now that I come to think of it, that that might not be the best response you could make to him: it would leave him the most bitterly disappointed man in the republic."

"I don't feel inclined to run away from this Mr. Austin, though I admit that I should like to give him a disappointment," said Garnett. "State what you think to be the next best move for me to make, Calthorpe."

"The next best move is to remain unmoved—to sit tight and await developments," said Sir Everard. "When he has bluffed a bit you shake his sleeves; his special card is pretty sure to drop out, and then you can examine it and make up your mind how to respond to it."

Garnett fumed for a while; he could not understand these underhand methods, he declared. He felt that he could not, without a loss of self-respect, meet such a man on his own ground; because a man is a trickster is no excuse for another man's turning trickster in

"Whatever faults Mr. Austin had, stupidity at billiards was not one of them."

[*To face p.* 66.

order to get the better of him, and so forth. But as he had made up his mind not to return to England, there was nothing for him but to take his friend's advice and await the appearance of the cryptic card which his friend affirmed the wily Mr. Austin intended to play.

As for Olive, it could not be said that she felt greatly distressed by her father's decision, when he made it known to her—he took care that he made it known to her himself: he had no notion of allowing the lover to put his interpretation upon it first. She told Arthur that, though she was disappointed at her father's failure to recognise how happy she would be with Arthur, still, being sure that he would do so before many days had passed, she meant to be patient. The only thing was that those days must be passed, or at least a portion of them, in the society of her father.

Yes, Arthur saw that clearly. He did not look forward with any large amount of interest to those days; but he made up his mind that he would pass as many of them as any fastidious man could, in the society of Mr. Austin, in order that he might be permitted to pass all the remainder in the society of Mr. Austin's daughter.

It was on the afternoon of the second day that Mr. Austin inquired if Arthur Garnett would play a game of billiards with him on the English table which stands in one of the rooms of the National, and Garnett said that he would be delighted. Whatever faults Mr. Austin had, stupidity at billiards was not one of them. Had he been as adroit in all his games as he was at billiards he would never have been found out. Arthur Garnett was an excellent player, but Mr. Austin could give him fifty

points in a game of two hundred and fifty, and beat him five times out of seven. But playing on these terms this afternoon, Arthur won with ease—suspicious ease.

Mr. Austin said, putting on his coat, that it was not his day. What could he do when the balls would not run for him? and they positively would not run for him.

Garnett admitted that his opponent's luck had been shocking, and then waited, while his opponent lit his cigar and rang for whiskies and Appolinaris.

"The fact is," said Mr. Austin, "I should not have played at all to-day. I am upset—a disagreeable letter from England. One can always tell from my billiard form what state my nerves are in. I should not have played to-day."

"It's not as if you were playing for the championship," said Arthur.

"Of course not; I don't mind being beaten by you, Garnett."

"Now and again—I am afraid that the 'again' will never come."

They drank their whiskies and Appolinaris, and then Mr. Austin sighed. He was thoughtful for some time—thoughtful and silent. Several minutes had passed before he said:

"By the way, Garnett, my referring to that letter which I received this morning has put a thought into my head. I wonder if you have lying by you a sum of money that you do not know what to do with—something that you would like to invest."

"I really could not say at a moment's notice," replied Arthur. "Willis is my business man. He usually looks after things pretty closely."

"Things have not been going so well as they might

with me," said Mr. Austin. "The letter which I got this morning, and which upset me a bit, was from Shansfield's lawyer. Shansfield holds a mortgage on my Holm Lea property, and unfortunately I have fallen behind in my payment of the interest. Things have been going badly with me; I dropped a lot of money over that rascal Hooper. Upon my soul, Garnett, these financial chaps would rob their own father. Hooper was the worst of the gang. The way he tricked me! I thought I knew something of men, but I was a child in the hands of Hooper—I admit it. I wonder if it would suit you to take over the mortgage, Garnett; it is only fifteen thousand —not a third of the value of the property, as you know."

"I don't know," said Garnett. "Of course, if you say that it is—but as I have just said, Willis looks after my business. I don't mind mentioning the matter to him, and telling him to look into it without a moment's delay."

Mr. Austin appeared to be but indifferently satisfied with the offer of his friend.

"I am not sure that these men of business invariably act in the interests of their employers," said he. "They are usually prejudiced against land nowadays. Long ago, in my young days, there was a general feeling that land offered the safest investment possible. 'The land cannot run away' was a saying of those days; then came some bad years, and it was found that land could run away—with a heap of money: and then the agents ran into the opposite extreme: they would not sanction a penny being invested in it. I wonder if you couldn't make this a personal matter, Garnett? If you were to wire to Willis to run the thing through, of course he would have to do it."

Garnett smiled.

"You do not know Willis," he said. "Willis takes his time."

"Hang it all, are not you his employer?" cried Mr. Austin, with some warmth.

"The way Willis puts it is that I am the man who is fortunate enough to obtain his services," said Garnett. "I do not see my way to give him any instructions in the matter of the transfer of your mortgage, beyond the suggestion that, if he considers the security sufficient, and if there is sufficient money to my credit, I should like the deed executed without undue delay."

Mr. Austin looked glum. He flung away the end of his cigar and lit another.

"The security is ample," he snapped. "If Willis or any one else suggests that the security is not the best obtainable, all I can say is that he lies. Holm Lea is a fine property—and there is the house. It was my hope to secure at least Holm Lea for my child, Garnett. Nearly all the rest of my property has gone to the—gone in various directions; but as I say, it was my hope that I should be spared the need of selling Holm Lea, my daughter's dower. If I had had a son—but Olive would never consent to the house being sold over her father's head."

Garnett sat perfectly silent, and there was no denying the fact that there was something very unsympathetic in his silence. He really could not trust himself to say anything. He had the feeling that the saying of one sympathetic word would be equivalent to the taking of a step toward an acquiescence in the man's proposal to sell his daughter for the sum for which his property was mortgaged. To be sure, Mr. Austin had been most careful

to make no suggestion to the effect that if Garnett were to accept a transfer of the mortgage, he might marry Olive as soon as he pleased; but all the same, Arthur could see the man playing his cards, and the card he had up his sleeve, with his daughter for the stakes.

He was silent; and in the silence he made a vow that whatever might be the result of his refusal, he would not treat with Mr. Austin for the hand of his daughter on the basis suggested by Mr. Austin.

He had no difficulty in perceiving that Olive's father was ready to make himself very disagreeable. It was clear to him that Mr. Austin was feeling it was a great pity that his daughter's suitor was not a younger man. There was much more responsiveness in younger men—much more generosity—much more warmth, loverlike geniality—than Arthur Garnett was displaying. A younger man would have been quite ready to write him out a cheque on account of the sum to be advanced on the transfer of the mortgage, and the next day he would probably (not unreasonably) inquire if Mr. Austin had acquired a sufficient knowledge of his character to make him confident that his daughter's future would be safe in his keeping.

But Arthur Garnett was thirty-two years of age, and every moment of his silence was convincing Mr. Austin that he himself had spoken the truth when he said that he was unacquainted with the nature of his daughter's suitor.

"I think, Mr. Garnett," said he, with a stiff dignity—"I think that in the circumstances you might have seen that it would be to your advantage to consider my proposition. To be frank with you, Mr. Garnett, I am disappointed in you."

He finished quite stiffly, and then got upon his feet, brushing from his waistcoat a few specks of ash that had settled there. The action was somehow a symbolic one: he seemed to wish Mr. Garnett to understand that in this way he was brushing aside the claims advanced by Mr. Garnett in his letter written at Fée.

But Mr. Garnett felt that he had acted according to his lights, whether or not Mr. Austin had wiped out his claim.

"It would be impossible for me to say at a moment's notice if it would be to my advantage to accept your proposition," said he. "With all the information which you have given me on the matter you brought forward, I can only say again that if my man of business considers the security——"

"Security, sir? Have you not had my word that the security is ample? Do you mean to doubt my word, Mr. Garnett?"

"Not for a moment. I hope you do not doubt mine when I say, as I do for the third time, that I shall place your proposition before Willis and urge him to have the transfer of the mortgage effected without the delay of a moment."

"I have heard enough about your friend Willis, sir," cried Mr. Austin. "You have elected to treat me as a stranger. Good! I accept the position, Mr. Garnett; and I must beg that you will treat me as a stranger in future."

With a frigid inclination of his head he walked out of the billiard-room.

Arthur Garnett felt that he was beginning to understand the man as Sir Everard Calthorpe understood him; and therefore he did not feel greatly put out by his insolence.

He was certain that Mr. Austin would think it to his advantage to treat him later on as if nothing had happened.

Olive had promised to go with him on the lake that afternoon, and he hastened to his room to put on his flannels. Half an hour afterwards he saw her leave the hotel, and stroll across the garden to the landing-stage where the boats were moored. He hastened to join her, and the boy brought out of its little dock the light skiff which he had ordered. He had just helped Olive into the seat in the stern, and handed her the yoke-lines, when a foot sounded on the planks behind him.

"Pardon me, sir," came the voice of Mr. Austin. "I venture to think that mine is a prior claim. I will accompany my daughter to-day."

Before Garnett had recovered from his surprise, Mr. Austin stepped into the skiff and settled himself at the sculls.

"Oh, papa!" said Olive in dismay, her face flaming.

"Tout prêt," said her father to the boat-boy, and the skiff was pushed off.

Arthur had turned red at first, but now he became white and his teeth were set. He remained for a minute or two on the landing-stage, feeling that he had been made a fool of. Then he strolled back to the hotel with his hands in his pockets. He went into the reading-room of the great marble hall and made a pretence of glancing through *Figaro*. After the lapse of a few minutes he got into the lift and was carried up to his room. With great calmness he opened his portmanteau and began to pack up his clothes. He loved Olive Austin so well that he was afraid to trust himself to remain any longer in the same hotel with her father; he felt that if he were to remain

he might be contemptible enough to humiliate himself before her father and agree to pay him his price—the price which he had placed upon his daughter.

His binoculars were hanging beside the window, and when they were in his hands he could not resist the temptation of sweeping them over the lake. In an instant he had them steadied upon the skiff, which was being sculled very leisurely toward the distant headland, where the wooden statue of the Christus stands, stretching forth gracious arms of benediction.

The girl in the stern was holding a handkerchief to her face.

He flung the glass upon his bed, and after pacing the room for a short time, he threw himself upon a chair, saying:

"I cannot do it. God help me! I am not strong enough to leave her."

He wheeled the chair round so that its back was to the window, and there he sat with his head bent forward to his hands. He was overwhelmed with grief and anger. He asked himself if he was prepared to go through life separated for ever from the one woman who had taught him what love meant—why he had been such a fool as to refuse to pay the man the price which he had asked for the privilege he had to grant? After all, the man was no more than a sordid rascal, and whatever shame there was in the transaction would be on his side, not on that of the man of whose love he sought to take advantage.

He sat filled with the bitterest thoughts, the most cynical thoughts, the most selfish thoughts of his life, until a crash of thunder that shook the hotel brought

him to his feet. His face had been down upon his hand, so that he had failed to notice how the room was becoming dark. It was now almost black. A flash of lightning cleft the darkness like a descending scimitar, and once more the building shook. There was a whirl of hail immediately afterwards, that sent a ghostly white radiance through the room, and then a hurricane squall tore through the trees of the gardens, sweeping them clean and hurling the sand of the walks into the air. The tumult of thunder mingled with the slapping of the hail upon the waves and the yell of the wind.

"My God!" cried the man in the room. "The boat! the boat!"

He rushed to the window. He could not see even the boats at the landing-stage. He seemed to be looking through a sheet of frosted glass. He seemed to be under water, and trying to penetrate its depths with his gaze. The rain and the hail mingled to make a Niagara in front of his window—dense—opaque. The light that this torrent reflected threw into the room a curious whiteness. He started, catching a glimpse of his face in the looking-glass; the reflection was ghastly. The lightning that flashed through this white atmosphere had the aspect of a quivering corpse-candle.

And then with appalling suddenness the thunderous sheet of cataract rain and hail ceased. It was as if Niagara, with its rush and roar, had in a moment ceased to fall while he watched it. He looked eagerly out, seeing the drifting swirl of the rain sweep wildly over the waters of the lake; it looked like the billowy swing of a mighty sail hanging from the heaven to the water, and as it swung onward it disclosed every moment a farther stretch of

the surface. He snatched up his binoculars, and put the tubes to his eyes. The next moment he had cried out and dropped the glasses, striking his forehead with his hand.

He made a rush for the door.

In the hollow made at the foot of that bulging sheet of rain he had seen a skiff, keel uppermost, and clinging to it one figure only. The face of that clinging figure was the face of Olive's father.

CHAPTER VII

ARTHUR GARNETT ran to the hollow of the lift. When he saw that the lift was not on his floor he rushed down the stairs headlong—reckless; through the hall like a madman—it was crowded with tea-tables, and the string band was playing something melodious in the minstrel's gallery; out through the wide door and across the promenade, now carpeted with sand and leaves and snapped boughs, to the landing-stage. It was deserted, for the waves were breaking over the planks. Arthur slipped and fell before he had taken half a dozen steps toward the boats; but he was on his feet again in a second. The skiffs were moored fore and aft to the leeward of the stage, and they were half full of water. One, however, had been hauled up, and lay with its keel to the rain. In another second he had launched the boat, and had taken a pair of sculls from another craft and laid them across the thwarts. He had seated himself and was straining every muscle at the sculls before he noticed that a commotion was being made at the next landing-stage—that boats were being launched—people shouting—some pointing out over the lake to others, who arched their hands over their eyes, peering into the distance in the direction indicated to them. Arthur knew roughly the course which he should take for the

capsized boat, though he was too low in the water to be able to catch so much as a glimpse of it; he trusted to be able to pick it up when he should get some distance out upon the lake.

Had he been a less adroit oarsman he could not have made any progress through the choppy sea that the squall had aroused. He had to dodge the waves, or the little craft which he was sculling would certainly have been swamped. With all his care the skiff shipped gallons of water.

When he had gone a considerable way in what he believed to be the right direction, he turned his head, thinking he would now be able to see the boat. The instant he turned he caught a glimpse of it, drifting keel uppermost directly in front of him, but still a long way off.

He bent to his sculls once again, but before he had given half a dozen strokes, he became as a man who has been paralysed in a single second, for he had just seen looking up at him out of the depths of the water the face of Olive Austin.

The boat had shot past her. One hand and part of an arm only were above the surface, swaying unevenly among the waves. The white dress which she was wearing streamed away from her body; her hair was woven and tangled all round her face; her eyes were wide open.

That glance of a second's duration revealed all this to him; and for another second he was paralysed, the blade of his sculls out of the water. Then he recovered himself. He backed with all his strength, and looking toward the shore at the same moment, saw that several boats had put off.

The face that had been staring up at him had turned

down in the water, and her hand was no longer above the surface. He dived beneath her and brought her to the surface within a yard of the skiff's mooring-line, which he had cast adrift before taking his dive. He caught the line and passed it under her arms, drawing the skiff to him until the bow was at his hand, and the line was quite taut. That was all he could do, and he knew it. He had no power to raise her over the bows of the little craft. Even if he himself had been in the boat he could not have lifted her over the bows. The attempt would have swamped him. But he had no trouble in keeping her head high out of the water, though it drooped helplessly forward—over his shoulder at first, and then, with the drifting of her dress in the undercurrent, backward, until her face was turned to the sky. Her arms dropped straight down from her shoulders, and the waves washed them to and fro. A long strand of her beautiful hair drooped from the back of her head, and the waves spread the ends abroad on the water. Some of it was glued to her face, and the ends of this were coiled about her neck.

But she was in his arms. He felt himself strong enough to combat death for her. He felt the personality of Death, so to speak, at that moment—the ghastly enemy stretching greedy skeleton fingers up from the water to clutch her and drag her down. But he would hold her and hold her. . . .

Were the boats never coming to his assistance? It seemed to him that hours had elapsed since he had entered the water—hours, and every minute, every second was precious. At last there was a boat on each side of him; the oars

were unshipped, voices were calling out; he knew what was needed in the boats—all the weight to be sent to the stern of the one over the bows of which she was to be lifted. He saw that the men at the oars understood it as well as he did. There was no risk of swamping, though the gunwale, while she was being lifted over, sank until only a couple of inches were free. A cascade fell upon his face from the front of her dress. It was icy—icy—clammy as the touch of Death himself.

Before the oars were once again in the rowlocks, a man in the boat had begun his operations for restoring her. He was an American doctor, who had been sheltering from the tempest in the boat-house close to the landing-stage when he had seen the capsized skiff.

Arthur watched him without a word. He dared not inquire what the man thought of her condition—if there was any chance of a spark of life remaining in her. He himself had seen drowned people, and he knew that the face of the girl who was lying in the bows was the same as their faces had been. There was no expression in it unless an expression of complete oblivion—a semblance of the changelessness of a statue carved in yellow marble. He had seen many statues that were more animate than her face. It was a blank. There was nothing of the rapture of repose in it, nothing of the agony of a last struggle for life. That was why he felt so hopeless. He felt that he was looking at nothing.

The doctor, who was following the instructions which Arthur had long ago read on a card in the Royal Humane Society's boat-house, had not put his hand over her heart. He was too practical to waste valuable time over a test. He assumed the hope and acted upon it.

"The National, her father has rooms," said Arthur, when the boat was approaching the crowd which had gathered on the landing-stage. And his mention of the father reminded him that he had not once looked round to see if another boat had picked up Mr. Austin. But even now he did not take enough interest in the fate of the father to take a glance across the lake.

The men in the crowd took off their hats, the women bent their heads and crossed themselves, while the girl was lifted upon the landing-stage and carried up to the hotel. That made him feel very hopeless, as he stepped ashore—he could not do so without assistance. He was shivering, his teeth chattering. Men took off their hats to him. When the girl was being carried across the landing-stage he had heard among the crowd a whispered repetition of the words "le corps mort"; now there was a buzz of the words "héros," "très brave," "grand courage." He went slowly up the steps of the hotel, the water still running in little streams off his clinging flannels. Entering the hotel, he made a joke to the manager, who was waiting to receive him—a joke about his entering the hall being like the bursting of a waterpipe. The manager knew that he was on the verge of a nervous collapse. He gave him a tumbler of brandy and accompanied him in the lift up to his room. Hot blankets were waiting for him. He was in bed and asleep within five minutes, and without having put a single inquiry to the manager respecting Olive Austin.

But when he awoke at nightfall he had in an instant full consciousness of all that had happened. Of all? Had something happened respecting which he remained in ignorance?

The awfulness of the thought of that something! That something which (if it had happened) would stand between him and happiness for evermore! He was afraid to ring his bell. He was not a coward, but he preferred the suspense: he could nurse a ray of hope.

But after half an hour of horrible wakefulness he could bear the suspense no longer. He got up and rang his bell. With the servant who responded to it came Sir Everard Calthorpe. Arthur sprang from his chair, caught the hand which his friend offered to him, and looked into his face. That look was enough for him. He threw himself on his bed and put his face down to the pillow.

"Dear old chap," said Sir Everard, laying his hand on his shoulder, "there is still some hope."

Arthur sprang up.

"Hope—some hope? She is not dead?" he gasped huskily. "But your face—heavens above, man, why should you come to me with the news of death on your face, if she is still alive?"

"I did not say that she was alive. She has given no response to the exertions of the doctors—no response whatsoever. Artificial respiration—you have heard of it—they have not paused for a moment during the four hours that have passed."

"Four hours—four hours! is it on record that any one ever responded after four hours?"

"The American man says 'Yes'; the other—a Swiss—is silent. But they have not paused for a moment. They are both fine fellows. Editha is there. She has faith."

"Women have faith in miracles—so have I. Oh, my God, why cannot I do something for her—something for

my love? Why is there no way known by which a man overflowing with life can give some of it—all of it—all of it—all his life and soul, to the one who needs it? Why may one not strike a bargain—a life for a life, a soul for a soul! would not that be fair? Is there any sense of justice in heaven? What can I do for her, Calthorpe? Tell me what I can do for her? Surely there is a power—God—I believe in God—and would it not be fair? Is it wrong to ask such a question? Who will say that it is wrong? Oh, Calthorpe, if I lose her I am lost—I said so that day when we arrived among the mountains and I had found that I loved her. I cannot lose her! Would God wreck two lives? Calthorpe, take me to her."

There he went to and fro in the room talking in those wild snatches. He was only partly dressed, and his hair was in tangles over his forehead. He was within a stride of delirium, Calthorpe could see.

"Dear old chap," said Sir Everard, soothingly, "it is best for you to remain here. I gave instructions that if she—if—if there was any change you were to be told at once."

"Take me to her," cried the other. "I must go to her."

He pulled on a coat and opened his door. Sir Everard saw that he was not to be restrained. After all, why should he not go to her? She had loved him. (He thought of it in the past tense.)

"I will take you to her," he said. "But can you bear it, Garnett? Are you sure that you can bear it?"

"Do not fear for me. I can bear the worst—or the best—the best is sometimes harder to bear than the worst. But do not fear for me."

They walked down the long corridor. A servant was

sitting on a chair opposite the door of a room at the very end. Two strangers coming up the corridor spoke in whispers and walked on tip-toe past the door: they looked on it as leading to a room of the dead. Then they went by Garnett and his friend with decently bent heads.

Suddenly the door opened and a man in his shirt-sleeves came out. He was breathing heavily and he wiped his forehead. Arthur recognised in him the American doctor. He gave him his hand. The doctor took it without a word. He was breathing as though he had just climbed a mountain.

Calthorpe held open the door while Arthur entered. Lady Calthorpe met him—he did not see her. His eyes had fixed themselves upon the bed. He could see the outline of the girl lying there among the pillows, but not her face. A young man with very fair hair was leaning over her, moving her arms in a curious way with a ryhthmical rise and fall and a pressure of the elbows under the lungs. Arthur had once assisted in this process of resuscitation. He understood the system.

He thought of what Calthorpe had told him: for more than four hours the doctors had persevered in their work of trying to induce the breath of life to come back to her, but as yet there had not been so much as a flutter of that butterfly which the most ancient wisdom of man has called "Life." Four hours!

The doctor varied his position by chance, and his next motion revealed the girl's face. Arthur saw it and gave a start, for the expression of nothingness which it had worn when he had seen it last had certainly changed. Her face was pallid as a pearl, but it had lost its expression of complete nullity. It was something.

"Arthur . . . flung himself upon his knees beside the bed."

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He was overcome by this that he had observed.

His hand went down upon Lady Calthorpe's wrist.

"She is living," he gasped. "I can see life in her face."

The doctor never so much as glanced round: he went on with his rhythmical movements. He had the aspect of a man of mystery performing some sacred rite.

Arthur was trembling in every nerve. His teeth were chattering. Sir Everard pushed forward a chair and took him by the arm. In a second Arthur had flung himself upon his knees beside the bed, stretching out his arms over the wraps until his hands were on her knees.

"Olive, my love, my love, come back to me—come back to me!" he cried.

The doctor did not so much as glance at him; he did not interrupt the rhythm of his rite.

"My love, you will come back. You will not leave me alone without love—without you," resumed the kneeling man, and his voice had a note of exultation as well as of passionate imploration—the exultation of faith. "Come back, my love, come back," he said, and his voice had reached a higher note. It frightened Lady Calthorpe. There was so much of the faith that exalts in the note of his voice that it seemed wanting in reason. She caught her husband's hand and put her face down to it, weeping silently upon it.

For some time there was no sound in the room but the heavy breathing of the doctor as he went with mechanical regularity through his work. Sir Everard patted his wife's hair gently. Her nerves were not so overstrained as to prevent her perceiving that he was becoming nervous.

Suddenly he raised his hand from her hair, and turned

his head half round, as if someone in the direction in which he looked had spoken. But he was looking toward the window, and no one was between him and the window.

His wife turned her eyes in the same direction, then looked at him inquiringly. He shook his head.

"A sigh—something like a sigh," he said, as if musing. "I fancied that I heard—it sounded like a little sigh; a child asleep—you have seen a child disturbed in its sleep—not awakened——"

Lady Calthorpe held his hand tightly in her own. She could not quite comprehend what her husband was talking about. Suddenly he caught her arm. . . . She heard it then, but it did not come from near the window; it came from behind them—a faint whisper—the shadow of a sigh.

"What is it—no one is there?" she whispered.

He shook his head. A look of perplexity was on his face.

The two stood there in the middle of the room listening eagerly. They both gave an impatient glance in the direction of the doctor, who was breathing heavily; his continuous exertions had somewhat exhausted him.

It came again—quite close to them this time: they need not have been impatient lest the sounds made by the doctor should prevent them from hearing the faint sigh that came so close to them; they heard it clearly.

"Olive, my love—oh, my dear love, come back to me," cried the voice from the bed. It had a curious—a terrifying note in it now: it was the voice of a man in delirium or on the brink of delirium.

Sir Everard and his wife were still standing in the middle of the room, in the attitude of anxious listeners. Suddenly they both jerked back their heads—the automatic movement made by a person to avoid a blow.

"What was that?" said the man in a whisper. "Did something touch your face?"

"Only a breath—it felt as if a moth had flown past," she replied.

"Yes; a breath—faint—I felt it on my cheek," he whispered.

Once again it came—the gentle suspiration—the scarcely audible sigh of a sleeping child who has a dream.

But this time it came from the bed.

Calthorpe and his wife turned quickly to the bed.

The doctor, without changing the rhythm of his operation, had put his face close to the pearl-white face before him on the pillows. His cheek was close to her parted lips.

"My colleague—you, sir, be pleased to summon my colleague—quick, sir," said the doctor, gasping a little. He had not much breath at his command.

Sir Everard hurried to the door. On a chair outside Dr. Haydon, the American, was sleeping with his head on his arm. He was awake and within the room in a second, bending over the face on the pillow.

"I fancied I was sensitive of a respiration," said the Swiss. "Perhaps I was mistaken. It is difficult to make a test when one is breathing with exertion oneself. I judged that you should be here."

Dr. Haydon kept his face down upon the pallid parted lips for more than a minute; then he applied a stethoscope. But when he raised his head after making these tests, there was no expression on his face that either Lady Calthorpe or her husband could read. As for Arthur Garnett, he was not watching either of the doctors; he was still kneeling by the bed, his face down upon the

mattress. No one paid any attention to him. Dr. Haydon poured some brandy into the drinking-cup which was on the table, and paused with it in his hand for some moments.

An exclamation came from Lady Calthorpe—a little quick indrawing of the breath. Her husband looked at her. She pointed to the bed.

"Her face—look at it; it has changed—I saw it change," she said.

"She is alive," said the Swiss.

"Yes, she is alive," said the American. "That is the expression that comes to the face—the relaxing of the muscles."

The expression that Lady Calthorpe saw upon the face of Olive Austin suggested acute suffering. There was a frown at first; a moment later and something like a spasm of agony spread over her face. There was a twitching of the eyebrows—such an expression of pain Lady Calthorpe had never seen upon any face. In ordinary circumstances she would have been sympathetic with the sufferer; but now she felt overcome with gladness. She knew that the more distinct the expression on that face became the stronger evidence it afforded that there was some strength of vitality beneath it.

Dr. Haydon tried her with the feeding-cup. For the first time since she had been brought to the room she was able to drink what was offered to her.

Editha Calthorpe threw herself on her knees by the bedside close to Arthur, and she also buried her face in the satin coverlet.

Sir Everard felt queer. He thought that the psychological moment had come to order champagne and other delicacies.

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Sir Everard returned to the room he found that he was needed. Arthur Garnett was seated on the floor at the side of the bed and Lady Calthorpe was talking to him as one talks to a child, telling him firmly but soothingly that he must return to his own room—asking him if he would not do so much for Olive. But he was behaving like a naughty boy. He said he was tired. He asked with a whimper why he could not be let alone. Did he ask too much, he inquired; he only wanted to be let alone. He was content to remain on the floor. The fact was that he had promised Olive to take her for a row on the lake, and he had not kept his promise. Something had happened—he didn't quite know what it was; but she must not think that he was to blame for it. He would wait and explain it all to her. She must not think that he was not a man of his word. It was absolutely necessary that he should explain to her that the figures she had seen on the White Causeway meant nothing. People had talked about the shapes being a presage of disaster. That was nonsense. One might as well say that it was a presage of disaster to see a rainbow. The rainbow was looked on as a symbol of hope; but the principle was exactly the same.

Lady Calthorpe was in tears. She had never wanted

her husband more than she did at that moment She knew what a delirious woman was; but a delirious man seated on the floor. . . . And then Sir Everard entered the room. He saw the light in Garnett's eyes and he heard his voice. The doctors were too greatly interested in the girl on the bed to allow themselves a moment to the man with the matted hair who was raving, but in a low tone, on the floor. The commonplaces of delirium did not interest them in the least.

Sir Everard took in the situation in a moment. He went to Arthur, saying:

"Up you get, old chap! Oh yes, you are going on the lake, I know; that is why I want you to put on your flannels. Good heavens! look at your costume. What's come over you, anyway, that you think of going on the lake in a smoking-coat? Come along, I'll rig you out."

Arthur seemed puzzled. He raised up an arm and examined the sleeve with the utmost care. Then he gave a laugh.

"I had somehow a notion that I put on my flannels," said he. "I believe that I could swear that I put on my flannels, Calthorpe."

"Come along," said Calthorpe, giving him a hoist.

He got slowly upon his feet, and passed his hand over his face wearily.

"I don't know what is the matter with me," he whispered confidentially in Calthorpe's ear while he was being led away. "Things seem a bit muzzy. I never knew myself to be affected by the snow. If this sort of thing goes on I'll go home—that's what I'll do."

Dr. Haydon glanced round.

"I'll attend to him in a few minutes," he said in a low voice. "Get him to bed. What is his number?"

Calthorpe told him and went off with Arthur.

Only for a minute did Dr. Haydon remain in Arthur's room—only while he administered a sleeping draught. Calthorpe asked him a question respecting Olive's condition, and the doctor did not volunteer anything.

"I intend to remain with him all night," said Sir Everard. "Just mention that to my wife, will you?"

For some time after swallowing his draught Arthur was talkative and incoherent. Several times during the night Sir Everard, lying on the sofa with a travelling rug over him, heard him rave; but toward morning he was sleeping silently and soundly, and Calthorpe was able to sleep also.

Lady Calthorpe came to the room shortly after nine in the morning, bringing with her a third doctor, an Englishman of eminence with whom she was acquainted. He did not arouse the man in the bed. He looked at him, and heard from Sir Everard that he had been tranquil for several hours. Then he remarked that he would probably awaken in full possession of his senses, and in a day or two he would have recovered completely. It was a smart shock that he had received, and it would be unreasonable to take it for granted that it would not affect him in any way. It was best for himself that the break-down had come at once—it would be sharp and short. He would not be delirious again.

The eminent man was generous in his reference to the perseverance of his brethren in the room at the end of the corridor. He had never known a case of such perseverance, he declared with enthusiasm. He was very generous, and he began to talk of Mont Pilatus.

When he had left the room Sir Everard found that he had a good deal to say to his wife. But she would not listen to his lyrics in praise of the nobleness of her self-sacrifice on behalf of the girl; she had too much to say about the girl and about those heroic medicine-men, who had snatched her out of the clutches of Death himself. But neither Sir Everard nor his wife referred to the curious freak of their nerves, that sigh-like sound which they had heard more than once in the room, followed by that sudden apprehension of something passing close to their faces—something invisible.

"It was nearly midnight before the doctors thought that she might be left to her natural breathing," said Editha. "Everard, it was like a second birth. All the characteristics were there. She was as angry at being brought back to life as a babe is at being born; you saw the expression on her face—agony. She cried like an infant; and when her eyes opened they stared at each of us in the way a child stares for the first time it sees one. Oh, there was never anything more pathetic."

"She saw you. Was there no look of recognition in her eyes?"

"Not the remotest. She might never have seen me before."

"Ah, she is weak. It could not be expected that she would have strength for that—to make such a sign. We do not know all that she must have gone through. But you saw her again?"

"Just before the nurse came—the Swiss, Dr. Ritter, sent for a nurse when they felt that they had been quite successful: yes, I saw her then, and her eyes were open; but she gave no sign."

"What do the doctors think? I have heard of cases of the memory being entirely lost."

"The doctors say nothing—I said a word or two to them on this point. They would not commit themselves. They are very modern men both. They chatted together about things cerebral—I could not understand more than a phrase or two; hearing them was like reading an American magazine. They even drew their own illustrations with pen and ink. They are both greatly interested. I began to wish that people had not discovered so much about the brain recently. The way those men talked—just as you do about the motor when it does not work normally, when you have tried a new carburettor. I did not like it, with that sweet girl lying with her beautiful hair scattered over the pillow—I combed it out for her—and her exquisite face lying there like a cameo, a finely-cut cameo, its expression quite changeless. Brain-centres—Dr. Ritter has a theory—he says that a thought is an act—something like that—a thought is a displacement of matter—something like that, and the other caught it up in a moment; and there was that cameo-face on the pillow, the gentle blue eyes looking innocently round the room! Not a word did I hear of the goodness of God in plucking her from death."

"That would not have been medical etiquette," said her husband, patting her hand. "It would have been encroaching upon quite another profession. There are medical missionaries as we know who have been in China, but a divinity-medico—oh no. But you prayed to God, dearest—you are a Christian woman."

"And my prayer was answered," said she, with a humility that almost deprived her boast of its vaunt.

"And that man there"—he jerked his head toward the bed—"prayed to her to come back to him. Well, between the three of you——"

"Do not be profane. God is the only All-powerful—mighty to save," said Editha.

"That is the end of all wisdom," said her husband. "The beginning and the end—the Alpha and the Omega of all wisdom. Now, my dearest, you must have the sleep which you so nobly earned. It has been a terrible night for us; but the girl has been saved. By the way, what about the father? Has he been to see her yet?"

"He never even sent to inquire about her," said Editha. "His man came to inquire on his own account. He did not even pretend that he had been sent by Mr. Austin. The man said that his master had told him that when the squall struck the skiff he lost one of the sculls, and in trying to recover it the boat capsized. He managed to get his hand on the keel, but Olive made the attempt to swim ashore. She is a good swimmer, and would probably have reached it if that appalling hurricane of hail and sleet had not come down upon the lake. It was that overwhelmed her. Her father was picked up by one of the boats, and was able to walk up to his room. He had a doctor all to himself."

"The medical profession in Lucerne will look up after this," said Calthorpe. "It is lucky that the father was not so far gone as to need praying for: there would be some difficulty finding any one who would undertake the duty. I should have liked to see him enter the hotel after being fished out of the lake. Some of the buckram must have been washed out of him."

"He will be as trim as ever to-morrow," said Editha.

"I wonder if his account of the accident is true. He would be quite capable of pushing his daughter off the boat if he found that it would not support the two of them."

"The act would not be murder—that point was decided years ago in a court of English law," said Sir Everard.

"Ah, he is just the sort of man to come clear out of every difficulty," said Editha.

"His cheeks run down with fatness when other people's cheeks run down with tears," said her husband, trying to shepherd her to the door. He was anxious that she should have the sleep which she had so well earned; he thought, too, that another couple of hours would do no harm to himself. Arthur was slumbering as profoundly as ever. But Lady Calthorpe seemed to have a good deal more to say to her husband just at that time; so many hours had elapsed since she had had a chance of conversing with him.

At last he managed, by the display of that tact which had made him so great a favourite at the legations, to get her to her own room, where he left her with a promise to awake her in time to dress for *table d'hôte*.

When Arthur Garnett's slumbers broke the day was pretty far advanced. At first he looked strangely at his friend, who was watching by his bedside, and his eyes went round the room with a puzzled expression in them. In a few moments he realised a good deal.

"Well, my friend, how do you feel now?" inquired Sir Everard.

"Calthorpe," said Arthur, "I recollect something—

but now it is as if I were only recalling a dream. I went with you into another room. I have a notion that I saw her lying on a bed. . . . That's all. I don't recollect in the least how I got back to this room. Calthorpe, I am strong enough to bear the worst, or if I'm not, what does it matter? Tell me the worst."

"My dear old chap, there is no worst—everything is the best; but are you strong enough to bear the best?" said Sir Everard.

Arthur looked at him for a long time without speaking. Then he gave a sigh and put out his hand.

"They have succeeded in bringing her back to life?" he said. "There is only one 'the best,' and that is it. I don't care about anything else. If that is true nothing can be wrong."

"And it is true," said Calthorpe. "Thank God! My wife was here some time ago. Olive is so far on the way to recovery that the doctors are thinking of reading papers on her case at the Medical Congress. When the medicos begin to look at the academic side of a case, you may be sure that they are satisfied with its progress. They are very friendly disposed toward Olive: they feel that she has done them infinite credit."

"Infinite credit," said Arthur, after a long pause; then he turned his face away from his friend.

His friend thought that that was a fitting moment for him to leave the room.

CHAPTER IX

THE next day Editha Calthorpe was permitted by the doctors to pay a visit to Olive—not merely was she permitted, Dr. Haydon actually invited her, only stipulating that he and his colleague must be present.

"We are both greatly interested in the case," said he. "She has not yet looked upon any face known to her before the accident. We are interested in noting the result, whatever it may be."

Lady Calthorpe professed to be greatly interested also.

Entering the room, both the physicians being present she thought it better not to rush to the bedside—this was her first impulse, but she restrained it. She concealed her emotion and tried to play the part of the cheerful visitor. She was quite prepared to make some casual remark—a remark that should take the girl's mind away from herself; that is the aim of a tactful visitor to the convalescent.

Olive was lying among her pillows and her eyes were open. Editha bent over her without a word. The girl looked up at her—in her eyes was no sign of recognition.

"Olive, dearest, I am so glad that you are yourself again," she said gently.

"Thank you; every one is so kind. But I am very lonely. I want to see some face that I know," said the

girl, in a low voice. "Why should I be left among strangers?"

"It was only for a day, dear. Now we shall all be near you. You cannot call my face the face of a stranger, Olive?" said Lady Calthorpe.

Olive gazed at her, still without giving any sign that she had ever seen her before.

"I am very stupid," said she. "I am trying to recollect. I seem to be in a new world. I cannot even remember why I am here. Who brought me here? You can have no idea how foolish I feel, for I really do not know who I am."

"It is not foolish. You have yet seen only strangers —mine is the first face that is familiar to you. You are still weak, but you will soon know us all again."

"But why do I not know you now? I am not really ill—only weak. And I feel so lonely. I had no idea that it was memory that kept one from feeling lonely. I feel that I should be all right if I could recollect who I am and what happened. Perhaps if you tell me your name something will come back."

"I am sure of it. Editha—Editha Calthorpe. Does not that bring back something to you?"

A perplexed frown came to the girl's face. She seemed to be trying to think—to work out some problem that was too much for her mind.

"I like to hear the name; but it brings back nothing to me," she said. "It is so stupid, is it not? But I feel as if you were saying something only to soothe me, just as one does with a child."

"Does the name Arthur Garnett bring back nothing to your mind?" asked Lady Calthorpe.

"Arthur Garnett—Arthur Garnett," repeated the girl, slowly and after a pause. "Nothing—I never heard the name before; but it is pleasant to say it—as pleasant as to say your name."

"Is it possible that the name Olive Austin means nothing to you?" asked Lady Calthorpe.

The girl shook her head.

"Who is Olive Austin?" she asked.

"You are Olive Austin, my dear child. That is your name," said Lady Calthorpe.

"I cannot contradict you," said Olive; "but it means nothing to me. Could anything be more stupid than for one to forget one's own name? Oh, I am hopeless—quite hopeless!"

"It is only because you are so weak. You have had a great shock. That has frightened everything away from your mind."

"Not quite everything. All to-day I have been thinking of the people who took me by the hand, welcoming me. I felt happy—completely happy. They took me by the hand, and they did not seem strangers to me. It was a long white causeway, and there was something beyond —something that I felt I had been longing for all my life. Approaching it was perfect happiness. I cannot tell you what happiness I felt, when suddenly a voice came up from the depths—the depths that I had left so far behind me, and I somehow felt that I could not but go back in obedience to its calling. I could not but obey. I did not wish to go back, but I had to obey it. I left all my happiness and came back to this—this misery of loneliness. . . . Now, tell me how it is that I can recall all this, but nothing more. When did this

happen? Can you tell me? Did it happen before I got the shock that you said I had, or after it? Did you know me before the thing happened?"

"My poor child! Surely you must recollect so much. Our days together at King's Knowle—the delightful time we had in Dorsetshire. Surely you must remember the walk through the Saas Thal before we reached Fée."

"Nothing—nothing comes back to me. That's why I feel so terribly lonely. I am like some one who has been cast on a desert island where nothing appears to remind him of his past life. I had no idea it was one's memory that kept one from feeling lonely. All that I can think of is the sadness of being so near happiness and then being forced back to this place—a stranger in a strange land."

"Ah, you must not talk—you must not even think anything so cruel as that. We are with you—my husband, Arthur Garnett, your father——"

"My father? Has he come to me yet?"

Lady Calthorpe brightened. Dr. Haydon, at the other end of the room, glanced over the edge of the newspaper which he had been pretending to read.

"He is in the hotel, of course; he will probably come to your room to-day or to-morrow. You remember your father?"

Olive shook her head.

"I have not the faintest—oh, I cannot think any more about this dreadful thing: it is too wretched to be thought of! Can you imagine one trying to work out the problem of one's own existence—standing out from oneself as it were, and looking at oneself as at a stranger—saying 'Who are you?' I seem to have seen you somewhere, but I

cannot for the life of me recollect where! That is how I feel. A stranger even to my own self. Had you any idea that memory was so much to us?"

"You are still quite weak, and I must not fatigue you, my dear Olive," said Lady Calthorpe, bending over her and kissing her. "I must leave you now. Take my advice and do not tire yourself trying to worry things out. Leave Nature to follow her own course. It may be slow, but it is certain to be the right course. The marvel is that you are so well as you are to-day. I have no doubt that in a short time you will be talking to us quite cheerfully over this trying period. All you need now is strength."

"You will return to me soon, will you not?" said Olive, looking wistfully after her as she went across the room.

"You may be sure that I will," Lady Calthorpe replied, smiling at her over her shoulder.

Dr. Haydon opened the door for her.

"One word," she whispered to him, and he went into the corridor with her.

"What is this?" she cried. "Is it, as I said it was, merely the result of her present prostration? Will she recover her memory as she grows stronger?"

He made an intellectual pause before he said, doubtfully:

"It is quite possible."

"What? You don't think that it is quite probable—quite certain?"

"It is far from being certain, though not outside the bounds of possibility," the doctor replied. "There have been cases—some fully authenticated—of the memory returning after such a lapse. We are only beginning to

understand something of cerebral phenomena. The brain is a wonderfully delicate instrument."

"But you see that she remembers a great deal that appertains to her past life, Dr. Haydon," said Lady Calthorpe. "She has not forgotten her native tongue—you heard what she said about a man on a desert island? Does not that show that she remembers something of her past life—something that she has read? She spoke of her father; she has not forgotten that it is expected of one to think of one's father. Is not all this encouraging?"

"Few persons who have had these lapses have forgotten all the associations of their former life," said he. "The brain responds automatically to certain suggestions. There is automatic cerebration—scientific opinion is divided in respect of its action and its limits. It may be the result of custom and heredity. When you think that we have not yet lost many of the tricks of our arboreal ancestors, our jungle ancestors, our cave-dwelling ancestors, though tens of thousands of years have gone by since there was any need for the practice of those traits, can it be surprising to you that there is an automatic action of the brain in regard to some of the things that have been associated for years with our daily life."

"And you think that she may do certain things—I should say, remember to do automatically certain things—the uses of certain things—certain facts such as the change of day and night and so forth, and still have no actual recollection of the events or of the people associated with her life in the past?"

"That is what I believe we are justified in thinking. We are not without evidence on this point. But of course, we know too little about these phenomena to be able

to say anything definite about any particular case. Personally I believe that complete loss of memory is rare. Lapses of memory are of daily occurrence. Within my own experience there have come cases of men suddenly forgetting their own names, their occupations, their place of residence, and then, quite as suddenly, having all brought back to their recollection. I have never had experience of a case of an absolute annihilation of the past. One supposed instance of permanent loss of memory was investigated by some medical men and proved to be a fraud. But we must not forget that the case of Miss Austin is quite outside ordinary experience. I tell you, Lady Calthorpe, that that young woman was to all intents and purposes devoid of life when she was brought into that room. I applied several tests to her while my colleague maintained his exertions to induce respiration, but to not one of them did she respond. It seemed the merest folly to continue our attempts at resuscitation. I know that when I communicate to the medical world my notes upon this case, it will be said that I am exaggerating some of the features that it offers to the consideration of students. It will be said that a new definition of death will be needed if my observations are correct. . . . Still, I repeat that this case may be only another instance of the lapse of memory, not its annihilation."

"You heard what she said she did recollect," said Lady Calthorpe. "The figures leading her to a place of happiness?"

The doctor paused before saying:

"Interesting. Yes; people who have been at the point of drowning have described the sensation as quite a pleasurable one—that is, when they go far enough; those who don't

go quite so far say that all their past life came before them within the limits of a second or two. Miss Austin went nearer to the brink than any mortal that ever lived."

"You gave a hint just now that led me to think that you believed that she was actually beyond——"

"Beyond the brink? Well . . . ah, I am afraid that it was I who went beyond it when I said so much. But I assure you, Lady Calthorpe, every test that I applied gave me the one response—a negative. You have heard of people being legally dead? Well, she was scientifically dead. She was as dead as science could make her—that is, science as it was understood up to the night before last. Miss Austin has forced science to enlarge its borders. By the way, do you happen to know what is her normal temperament?"

"I had always looked on her as a very placid girl," said Lady Calthorpe. "But I think she must have been more nervous than any one could suspect. One night when we were among the mountains there was a rumour of an accident. We had reason to believe that a man to whom she was attached—Mr. Garnett—was the victim. We heard the evil tidings, and she was overwhelmed. Only for a few moments, however; then she quite took my breath away by calmly avowing that he was safe. She was herself assured of it; and so it turned out. I asked her how she had come to be so certain, and she admitted that she possessed a certain sense of premonition, and that this was not the first time she was conscious of it. That makes me think she was of a nervous temperament."

"What you have told me increases the interest of the case," said the doctor. But he did not show that he

was greatly impressed by what he had heard. "Perhaps her father could come to her this evening—he is not much the worse for his exposure. And Mr. Garnett—it is quite possible that his coming may have the effect of stimulating her memory. It is marvellous what effect the emotion of love has upon the brain-centres of a person of nervous temperament. I say 'brain-centres,' so that I may not become unintelligible by using scientific jargon."

Lady Calthorpe said that she had heard something like this before, in even less scientific language. Then she thanked Dr. Haydon for having taken her into his confidence and having been so lucid in his prognosis of the case, and went to her room.

She told her husband practically all that the doctor had said, and Sir Everard was very grave, after hearing that Olive had failed to recognise her friend, and that Dr. Haydon had in his mind the scientific record of cases in which persons who had been resuscitated at the point of drowning had completely lost their memory. He was only slightly less grave when his wife added that in the large majority of cases with which the doctor was acquainted, memory returned after lapses of varying duration.

"I myself have known of such lapses," said Sir Everard, "some of them occurring apparently without any reason. I think I told you of meeting a man in the Ceinture in Paris who begged of me to tell him where he was, as he had just become conscious of a total lapse of memory. He did not even recollect his own name."

"You told me that story," said Lady Calthorpe. "I thought it rather daring of you to take charge of the man. But I think you said that you were certain he was not an impostor."

"He certainly was not an impostor. I was glad that I could be of some assistance to him. The papers are full of accounts of such lapses. But I have never heard of a case in which the memory went for ever."

"Dr. Haydon's experience is the same. The only thing is that Olive went very much farther—much nearer the brink, the doctor called it—than any case of which a record remains."

"That only means that her lapse may be of longer duration. At least, we can hope so much without being unreasonable."

Sir Everard walked about the room uneasily for some time. Then he went to the window and opened it. He stood musing there for some time, watching the landing of the passengers from the *Wilhelm Tell* on the quay at the other side of the blue lake—watching the light clouds that broke themselves into fleecy fragments upon the fleecy peak of Mont Pilatus—watching the gasoline launches stealing silently from the landing-stages just beneath him, across the silent surface of the lake. At last he turned from the window to his wife.

"After all," he said, "even if her memory has become annihilated—this is assuming the worst—but even so, I say, it is nothing very dreadful. It is only like starting life anew. The friends that she had she will have again; and as for Garnett—well, I think we can answer for Garnett."

"Of course we can answer for him," said Editha. "But I have great hopes that his face will be the means of—of—what did Dr. Haydon call it—'stimulating the brain-centres.' He said that the emotion of love is now and again 'stimulating to the brain-centres.'"

She laughed, and her husband joined her.

"That discovery gives him an additional claim to our respect," said he. "If you want to know with great exactness what love is not, go to a scientific man. But we will not say anything but what is good about Dr. Haydon and his colleague, whatever may happen. And I repeat, that even if the worst were to happen, and Olive's memory were to be annihilated, the consequences would not be unspeakable—assuming, of course, that she does not forget the elementary things of daily life. You said she was all right in this respect?"

"Dr. Haydon called it automatic action of the brain," said Lady Calthorpe. "Things that we have been doing for centuries we continue doing without using our brains. Oh, my poor brains are weary trying to differentiate on these scientific points!"

"Ah, that is because women have not become habitual thinkers," said her husband. "They don't do it automatically yet. Heaven help the world if women acquire the thought habit!"

"Men will decree a black list for the habitual thinker among women, so all will be well," said Editha.

"By that time the makers of English—they live in the East End—will have invented the word 'thunkard' as an obvious analogy to describe the habitual thinker who is a nuisance to society," said Sir Everard. "But don't fear, my dearest: our most implacable enemies will find out a more appropriate name for you and me."

And then, with smiles and an arm about a waist and a pressure of lips upon a white forehead, the scene which had begun seriously flickered out.

CHAPTER X

MR. AUSTIN had remembered that he was expected to act the part of the Devoted Father, and the recollection annoyed him. It was on awaking from an untroubled sleep on the morning after the accident that it flashed across his memory that when he had last heard of his daughter she was still unconscious. He was sitting up in bed drinking something warm and spirituous when that memory flash came to him. He had drunk one glass of his restorative and was watching his valet pouring out a second.

"Capital stuff that, Alison," he remarked. "I think that, next to Providence, I owe my life to it. I was badly shaken, Alison—such a shock at my time of life . . . . by the way, have you heard anything from the room above us—I would not put a second lump of sugar into it—anything of the condition of Miss Austin? A trifle more Maraschino, Alison."

"It is not so strong as what you had before you went to sleep, sir," said Alison, the valet. "I made it pretty stiff then. Oh yes, sir; a message was sent down from Miss Austin's room before eleven o'clock to say that Miss Austin had been brought round all right and was doing well. Of course, I didn't awake you, sir. You had just gone off into a sweet sleep, and I 'adn't the 'eart.

I'm not sure about that Maraschino, sir. It don't assimulate right with the other ingreduants. I took the liberty to send your compliments to the young lady's room twiced to-day to inquire."

"Quite right, Alison. Quite right. I knew that I could trust to your good taste."

"I thought I might venture on the Maraschino, though I have had no experience of it, sir. It don't suit every palate, doesn't Maraschino."

"No; but I meant—ah, possibly a dash of Menthe—and she is doing all right. Thank God for that! Thank God for that! She struck out for the shore. I called upon her to hold on by the keel. I was holding on by it myself; but——"

"Young ladies is 'eadstrong, sir. Best not worry yourself at this cricketal junctuaw. You'll only excite yourself, sir."

Thus it was that Mr. Austin satisfied his own easy-going conscience in the discharge of his whole duty as a father. But he did not carry to any excess the tenderness of feeling which he displayed at this time, for when a message came to him that he might pay a visit to his daughter, he excused himself on the ground that he feared it would be too much for his daughter in her present weak state, and it certainly would be more than he could conscientiously face. He was still very feeble, he said, and he was afraid that he would not be able to bear up against so emotional a scene as a meeting with his daughter must entail.

Thus it was that Arthur Garnett was admitted to the room before Olive's father found his way thither.

Calthorpe had prepared his friend for the possibility of a disappointment. He had hinted at the girl's lapse of

memory; adding the doctor's belief, rather more strongly than the doctor had expressed it, that in the course of time—a short time—she would recover her faculties. So that, if she failed to recognise him, he would understand that there was no need for despondency—it would be foolish for him even to feel disappointed. She had not known Editha; but Editha was too sensible a woman to feel piqued, being aware of the fact that the poor girl was not herself. In a week or two—perhaps only a day or two—she would be herself.

Arthur listened to all that his friend had to say on this subject; and he acquiesced in all. He too had read of the phenomena of a lapsed memory. Why should he be disappointed if Olive failed to recognise him? Had Calthorpe thought him, Garnett, a confirmed fool because he had said a few rambling phrases of delirium a couple of nights before? But he thought it was quite possible that she would recognise him, all the same; if, however, she were unable to do so, he could only be patient, awaiting the return of her memory and her love.

He entered her sitting-room just as Lady Calthorpe had entered her bedroom, as naturally as possible, with no obtrusive gentleness. Olive was able to leave her bed for an hour or two, and to lie on a couch. Opposite to her the window leading to the balcony was framed by a picture of the mountains; the balcony was broad enough to shut out the lake from her sight. The view of the mountains delighted her eyes, but she had conceived a violent repugnance to the lake. Walking from the one room to the other on Lady Calthorpe's arm, she passed a window through which the superb chain of peaks and ridges stretching to the Rigi was visible, and she cried out in delight; but going to the

window she was able to glance down upon the lake. At once she cried out, and turned away her eyes, shuddering.

"Horrible! horrible!" she whispered. "I want only to see the mountains—I love the mountains; but the water—oh, I am foolish! Why should I not like the view of the water? I cannot bear it. But the delight of the mountains!"

She was on her couch gazing out upon the mountains when Arthur entered. She glanced round at him for a moment, and then her eyes went back to the snowy peaks. She pointed out to Lady Calthorpe some new charm that she had just perceived—a glint of sunshine that shot through a lace cloud above the heights.

He remained in the middle of the room, for he had seen that in the glance which she had cast in his direction, there was not the slightest recognition of him.

For the moment he had the sensation of being "cut" by an acquaintance. He reddened as a man does on being suddenly affronted. Poor Lady Calthorpe was in great distress. She was doing her best to divert Olive's attention from the mountains to the man, while Olive was wondering why her friend was so unappreciative of the delicate charm of that floating cloud.

Sir Everard stood by, seeing the irony of the situation: there was the girl, who took an infinite delight in looking out upon the mountains, quite unaware of the fact that she did so because of the joy that had come into her life among such mountains through his being her companion; and there stood the man, ignored by her. Sir Everard knew, what the girl did not know, that she loved the mountains because she had been loved among them. She had lost the memory of her love,

but it had left an impression upon her life that was indelible.

It was one of the subtlest of the jests of Fate—one of the cruellest.

"My dear, this is Arthur Garnett—you will speak to him?" said Lady Calthorpe, when she at last succeeded in drawing her away from the peaks.

Olive turned her head as she had done before, and looked straight at him. In her eyes there was no sign of recognising him.

"Another stranger?" said she, indifferently.

"Speak to her, for heaven's sake, Arthur," said Lady Calthorpe, with something like impatience, hastening to him.

He took a couple of steps toward Olive, and said:

"Olive, my love, come back to me."

She started up with a sudden cry. He had put out his hands to her. She shrank back from him. On her face was an expression of something more than fear.

"You—it was you—I know your voice—it was you who called me in those very words from my happiness to my misery," she cried. "Why did you do that? Did you envy me my happiness on that white causeway where they had brought me? Tell me that—tell me why I had to obey you when you called me back to this misery?"

"I called you back because I loved you—because I could not have lived if you had been apart from me," said Arthur.

"You could not have loved me or you would not have called me from the happiness that was before me into the misery of this lonely life," said she. "The people of the causeway were my brothers and sisters—they knew me, and they loved me. They were leading me

"'My dear, this is Arthur Garnett—you will speak to him?' said Lady Calthorpe."

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to happiness, when your voice came saying those words—so cruel—so cruel! And I could not but obey! That is the strange part of it: I could not but obey. I do not know what I said when I parted from them. I have been trying to think; but I know that they were sorry. Where was that? Where is that causeway? You must know because you were just below it. I am sure that if I found it once more all my memory would come back to me?"

"Ah, my dear love, I cannot tell you where is the land of your dream," said he. "It was the worst hour of my life when I called upon you to come back—I called out of the agony of my breaking heart. I pointed out the snowy causeway to you when we were happy together among the mountains."

She looked silently into his face for a long time, then she turned her head away from him, in the direction of Lady Calthorpe, who was at the other side of the couch.

"He was not one of the figures who were on the causeway," she said in a low, firm tone. "His voice came from the depths—far below us. I have not lost my memory for that. I told you all the first day we were together in this place."

"Yes, you told me about hearing that voice, and I knew that you were repeating the words that Arthur Garnett cried out when he knelt at your side," said Lady Calthorpe. "He cried out to you because he loved you and you loved him."

"I do not love him now," said Olive. "I cannot believe that I ever loved him, and I am sure that he never loved me, or would he have—oh, it only adds to the cruelty of everything to hear these things!"

"You are quite right, my dear child," said Sir Everard, coming to her side. "We shall always be at cross purposes if we continue to talk to you of people whom you cannot remember. One might as well hope to interest an Australian native in Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, or a Maori chief in Walter Pater. By the way, I wonder if you ever read Johnson's *Life*."

"Of course I read it," said she, quickly.

"I thought you must have. I wonder where you read it," said he, with an affectation of carelessness.

The puzzled frown which had appeared so frequently on her face came over it again.

"If I recollect reading the book, surely I should recollect where I read it," said she. "That is how I am so silly. I remember the name, Boswell's *Life of Johnson*; I know what it is about; but where I read it or when is a complete blank to me. I do not remember anything that I did on any day of my life. That is what seems to me so ridiculous—so inconsistent. How is it possible to remember a book when one cannot recall a face?"

"Dr. Haydon may be able to explain something about the brain cells; I don't profess to know anything except my own ignorance, and I haven't quite got to the bottom of that yet," said Sir Everard.

"I wonder if you know what Paris is, Miss Austin," said Dr. Haydon, laying down his note-book and coming to her side.

"Of course I know that Paris is the capital of France," she replied.

"Ever been there?" he asked.

The frown came to her face. She appeared to be trying hard to think out something that puzzled her, as a school-

girl tries to work out a mental problem that has been set before her—something, maybe, respecting the number of farthings in a sum of pounds, shillings, and pence.

She shook her head.

"I can remember nothing of Paris—I do not remember having been there," she said. "But this is on my mind: every one has been to Paris and to London—something tells me that."

There she was, quite interested in her own problem, quite interested in the questions which were put to her, while all the time the man to whom she had been devoted stood silently by, his very existence ignored by her.

To Lady Calthorpe the scene was a painful one. She admired Arthur for the strength of mind he displayed in concealing the agony which she knew he could not but feel, since Olive had said those cruel words:

"I do not love him now."

The complete indifference to him which the girl showed after her first upbraiding of him, was the cruellest element of the whole scene; and yet he so mastered his own feelings that he was able to stand there watching the girl's show of interest in the questions put to her by the doctor and Sir Everard Calthorpe, while ignoring him. The greater the interest that she took in these questions, the less she was bound to take in him. Lady Calthorpe perceived this fact, and was somewhat irritated at the encouragement which her husband had given to Olive's neglect of Arthur; though when she began to consider the matter, she saw that he had at least succeeded in diverting the girl's attention from the grievance which she believed she had suffered at the hands of Arthur.

Arthur smiled at her, but very cheerlessly, when Olive was brightening up under Dr. Haydon's questions about Paris.

"I don't see that I need remain here any longer," he said to her in a low voice.

She could not trust herself to speak. She held out a hand to him. She did not turn her head away from him so quickly as to hide from him the tears which were in her eyes.

He stole from the room. When turning the handle of the door, Olive glanced round at him. In her eyes there was no expression of dislike; they wore an expression of indifference only. It mattered nothing to her whether he went away or remained. But when he had disappeared she said to Editha Calthorpe:

"It is rather melancholy, is it not, that the only memory which I retain is an unhappy one?"

"Ah, if you only knew, my dear Olive—if you only knew!" said Lady Calthorpe. "He is the best man that ever lived. I hope that he will be able to bear up against this terrible shock."

Olive looked wistfully out at the mountains. Her face became sad. She did not speak a word, nor did Lady Calthorpe. The latter was wondering how her policy of letting people alone would work in such an exceptional case as that of Arthur Garnett and Olive Austin. It had worked quite satisfactorily in their case before; but would its result be equally so under the altered conditions of their relationship?

She was not quite certain on this point. And until she had made up her mind definitely, she thought it better to refrain from saying anything further to her in Arthur's favour.

Later on Dr. Haydon had another conversation with Olive, with a view to informing himself more fully as to the limits of her knowledge. He found it difficult to reconcile with any theory of automatic cerebration with which he was acquainted, the fact of her being able to state what were the contents of a book which she had read long before, and yet to be without a memory of where she had read the book. There was a certain amount of illumination in her remark that she had a feeling that every one must at some time have been in Paris and London. He ventured to classify this remark under the heading of "Automatic Impressions" in the paper which he read at the meeting of the Psychical Research Society of the United States; but he admitted that the acceptance of his theory on this point was open to many objections. The fact was, he explained, that the case of Miss A—— had so little in common with other cases susceptible of being included under the heading of "Lapsed Memory," that it should be considered quite separately from them. The case of Miss A—— was, in fact, a theory-framing case in itself. It overturned a good deal that had been taken for granted in considering cerebral phenomena, though at the same time it confirmed some opinions which had been recently advanced on the subject of the sectional subdivisions of the brain.

Dr. Haydon was naturally intensely interested in the meeting between the girl and Arthur Garnett. Of course, being a scientific investigator rather than a man, he was not greatly concerned in the nature of the reception of Garnett by the young woman. The attainment of the happiness of an individual was nothing to him, his aim being the increasing of the knowledge of the race. Nature

aims at the prosperity of the race; and in achieving it is guilty—so the race has said—of innumerable cruelties, such as battles and plagues and other ways of getting rid of the undesirable. In order to counteract Nature's cruelties, the wisest (they think themselves the wisest, and having themselves defined what wisdom is, they cannot but abide by their decision) have invented peace congresses and schools of medicine. Dr. Haydon hoped that he was walking hand-in-hand with Nature when he ignored the happiness of the individual in order to add to the knowledge, if not the wisdom, of the race.

He was therefore greatly interested in observing the reception given to Garnett by Miss A——, and he knew in his heart, without feeling any particular self-reproach, that he was glad rather than sorry that it was as it was. It was surely curious to note that the girl who had been devoted to the man—Dr. Haydon accepted Lady Calthorpe's testimony as to the devotion—before her accident, looked on him with something akin to repugnance three days after she had recovered consciousness. And it was surely intensely interesting for him to know that her antipathy was due to the first exercise of her memory in her new life, so to speak. Her first memory was of the sensation that she had experienced when in that intermediate condition in which she had been lying for several hours, when he and his colleague were wrestling with Death for the life of the girl, as Herakles had wrestled with Death for the life of Alkestis. She had clearly been at the point of re-animation when her lover had sent forth his half-delirious imploration; the first sensation of her recovered consciousness was his voice, and on her complete recovery she had not failed to associate

it with the pain incidental in her case, as in almost every case, to re-animation.

It was all delightfully simple when one was able to work out the matter on scientific lines, as he knew he was doing. All a truly scientific man had to do was to get hold of the right end of this apparently tangled skein of incidents, and the whole was unravelled and stretched out before his eyes taut and well defined. He felt that he had every reason to be pleased with himself.

Of course, he had ignored those details which she had given of her sensation at the instant of reviving. She had said something about an intense happiness, and her companionship with beings who seemed pleasing to her. He had explained to Lady Calthorpe that her description of this incident hardly differed from that given by other persons who have been at the point of death from drowning. There could scarcely be a doubt that the idea of Paradise, which has found so wide an acceptance among civilised people and even Jews, had its origin in the statements made by persons who had been led back to life after being at the point of death.

Dr. Haydon wrote up the notes of his further experience of the interesting case of Miss A—— with the greatest satisfaction. He had come to Switzerland for a holiday, and he had hoped to enjoy himself; but not for one moment had he dared to expect such satisfaction among the mountains as he was now experiencing.

CHAPTER XI

NO one had taken the trouble to inform Mr. Austin respecting the peculiarities of his daughter's condition; and this was rather a pity, for he was quite unprepared for the reception which awaited him when after an interval of a day or two, he found his way to his daughter's room. She was still on the sofa, and by her side was Lady Calthorpe, who had just returned from paying a visit to a friend who had a villa in the neighbourhood. Mr. Austin, exercising that good taste for which he was noted in matters of dress, had divested himself of all the appurtenances of jauntiness for this occasion. He was facing an affecting scene—a scene that could not but possess some of the characteristics of a religious ceremonial, and such a scene should be appropriately dressed.

He would be expected to clasp his daughter to his breast. He would not make the act ridiculous by the wearing of one of the besprigged white waistcoats which he usually affected. His handkerchief, which his gratitude to Providence would put into prominence, should not be the rose-tinted one which matched his holiday tie, but one of white cambric. He was very nearly buying one with a narrow black border on it, to suggest that his child's mother was not forgotten by him, although he had been a widower for fifteen years. He thought,

however, that the white one would do; the other might not suggest exactly what was in his mind.

His tie was negligently fastened, and this incident in the scheme of his attire could not but convince any one accustomed to his trimness of scarf, that he had been greatly perturbed about his daughter. A soft-fronted shirt would give him the minimum of inconvenience when he should press his child to his bosom. He thought over all these points the day before, and he was assuredly garbed with every appropriateness when he entered the room.

He stood at the door. Seeing that Lady Calthorpe was beside Olive, he made a convulsive clutch at the back of the nearest chair. He was trembling with his emotion, yet trying for the girl's sake to master it. No, he would not break down.

And he didn't.

"Olive—my child—my child, restored to my arms!" he cried, and a sob was in every word. He felt that he was an ideal father—that, in fact, he was beyond the modern ideal of a father; he went back to Dickens and Mr. Toole, whose quavering voice in the palpable pathos of one play of the sixties—something with a lame child in it—he was imitating. The tears actually came to his eyes as a tribute to his own powers. But he did not break down.

Olive moved her head and looked at him. She laughed, and her laugh was disconcerting. He had been letter-perfect in his part on entering the room, but now he knew nothing of it. And Lady Calthorpe, who represented his audience, was smiling—with a frown. He was quite put out.

"I am so glad to find you amused, Olive," he said after an interval, during which he straightened himself, shot his shirt cuffs an inch or two beyond the cloth of his coat, and walked slowly to the sofa. "You look better than I expected—laughing—oh, I am delighted, I am sure. I did think that you might have sent to inquire how I was. All the anxiety, all the suffering, seems to have been on my part, Lady Calthorpe. One does not expect much from strangers, but with one's own flesh and blood. . . . I hope you explained that you struck out for shore voluntarily, Olive. I entreated you to try to regain the boat. You may not have heard me through the noise of the hurricane, but I did."

She stared at him, then she turned to Lady Calthorpe inquiringly.

"He is your father," whispered the latter.

"You look at me as if you had never seen me before," said Mr. Austin, complainingly. "I must confess, Olive, that this is not the sort of meeting to which I looked forward when lying awake through the long dreary nights thinking of you. I might be the utterest stranger. Do you doubt my word that I begged of you to remain with me and the boat?"

She continued staring at him. Then she put up her hands to her face and began to weep. It was the first time since her recovery that she had wept, and Lady Calthorpe thought that she could understand the reason for her tears.

She took Mr. Austin to one side.

"Perhaps you should have been told before to-day of what has happened," said she, in a low tone. "Mr. Austin, you will be grieved to hear that Olive is suffering from

a lapse in her memory. You have, I suppose, heard of people forgetting all the past after being unconscious for a long time. Your poor child is suffering in this way. You must not be hurt because of her failure to recognise you. The doctor gives us hope—great hope—that the lapse will not be permanent. Meantime, however, her mind is a blank."

She saw a distinct brightening of the man's face when she told him this, even though he did not seem quite to realise what her words amounted to. But when he seemed to grasp it all, a sigh came from him—a sigh of relief, it seemed to Lady Calthorpe.

He had become himself again. He remembered his part. Out came his handkerchief with a whisk. He threw himself into a chair and bowed his head. His pose was of the prostrate father—grief-stricken.

The sound of the paddles of one of the lake steamers throbbed through the silent room.

At last Mr. Austin seemed once more to pull himself together. He shook out his handkerchief spasmodically and returned it to his pocket; he took care that he left exactly the right amount showing. Then he rose from his seat, and put out his right hand to Lady Calthorpe, saying:

"This is the bitterest stroke that has yet fallen upon me. To think of my daughter—my own flesh and blood—the only one in the world . . ."

He turned away and once more he bowed his head. He felt that he was doing it very well, and so he was. For even Lady Calthorpe believed that underneath his acting and posing there was some genuine feeling. This impression was strengthened by his refraining from any

protestation to her that he was heart-broken. He did not say another word to her, but walked across the room to his daughter's sofa. He bent over her and kissed her on the forehead.

"My poor child," he whispered. "Lady Calthorpe has told me of your terrible misfortune. Is it possible that you do not know me—that you have no recollection of seeing me?"

She continued sobbing.

"Alas! alas!" he said. "It might have been thought that a father—a father—would be exempt from the general—the general terms of your—your—misfortune. I should have thought that there was something sacred—something almost divine in the sentiment of fatherhood that would have saved me from the general—general blotting out. Alas! alas!"

She looked up to his face for a long time, and at last put out a thin white hand to him.

"What does it matter?" she said. "Cannot I be a daughter to you now, even if I do not remember anything of the past? Cannot I learn to love you as my father?—I already begin to feel less lonely, knowing that I have a father. I have a feeling that if I remain near you I shall get back all that I have lost. Something will bring back all the past to me. But if not—well, may I not begin now to make a store of pleasant memories?"

"True—true, my dear child. I shall devote my life to you," he cried, with all the fervour of a convert to a new system—a neophyte in an untried cult. "Yes, you shall have no memories of your father but those that are grateful—gracious. You will ever be my first thought,

Olive. We shall be all in all to each other. I shall settle down, Lady Calthorpe. The hearth! ah, the hearth! if men only knew it, they would not allow themselves to be led away by ambition—by—by all the lures that the world offers. There is nothing better that the world has to offer us—nothing better than the hearth and the home—you take my word for it, Lady Calthorpe."

"I will take your word for it, Mr. Austin," said Lady Calthorpe, with so marked an inflection that it conveyed to the person whom she was addressing that it would be as well for him to bear in mind that it was not she whose memory had lapsed.

He looked at her, and his eyes fell.

"I may not have been in the past all that I should have been," he said, in the tone of a man whose eyes are upon the floor—he had subdued his voice to the humility of his vision. "But I have learnt my lesson. I will be a good father to her, Lady Calthorpe."

He seemed somehow to be quite relieved that his daughter had lost her memory; and Lady Calthorpe felt sure that if the same casualty had overtaken a good many other persons with whom he was acquainted, and who, she knew, were acquainted with some of the episodes of his past life, he would have been additionally jubilant.

He had hold of Olive's hand, and was caressing it with all the ease of one who has practised paternity at all seasons. His daughter looked as if she were making a considerable effort to be pleased. Lady Calthorpe that night felt that she herself had been wrong in that she had felt impatient on witnessing the satisfaction—the submission—of the girl when her father had caressed her hand.

But the fact was that at that moment Lady Calthorpe was contrasting the attitude of the girl in regard to her father with her bearing toward Arthur Garnett when he had come to her a couple of days before, and the result of this comparison was to irritate her in some measure. She was not so unreasonable, however, as to retain her irritation for any considerable time. "After all, a father is a father, even though he is Mr. Austin," she said to her husband, "and I am sure that we all wish that he——"

"We do, we do," acquiesced her husband.

"Yes, we do; but all the same he won't," said Editha.

"I'm afraid that he won't," said Sir Everard, shaking his head. "I'm afraid that what Old Man Austin was thinking, all the time that he was ambling along through the commonplace pastures of pathos, was that it was a great pity that there was no chance of his daughter's mishap becoming epidemic. If only the same calamity might overtake his creditors!"

"I could see it on his face," she said. "Still——"

"To be sure, to be sure, there's still that 'still' to fall back on," said he.

He read her expression as decisively as she read Mr. Austin's; and he know that she was recalling some excellent books that she had read in the good old days when excellent books were written—stories in which reprobate fathers were led back to the domestic hearth by the hand of a child. If these things had happened at one time they might happen again, and so she said "Still——" after acknowledging that she had seen on Mr. Austin's face an expression of hopeless worldliness.

She came upon Arthur among the pillars of the marble lounging-place an hour after Mr. Austin had been playing at paternity. The band was just tuning up for afternoon tea. They went together to the cane table that stood close to the big window with the porch behind them, and to the accompaniment of the overture to one of that delightful "Flyaway Girl" cycle of chaste and classical music which has spread its fragrance through the world, they had their little chat together.

He was more than interested to hear what Olive had said to her father.

"I feel that she could not have received him as she did unless she had some memory of—of—I scarcely know how to express it—something like the duties of daughterhood is what is in my mind," said Arthur. "She must retain some of that love for a father which I suppose comes naturally to all of us; and if that is so, may I not reasonably hope that—you know what I am thinking of: you must know that I am ready to grasp at a straw."

"Yes, I know," she replied. "There is a good deal of straw-clutching done between us just now, Arthur. I still feel that everything will come back to her some day. Oh, it would be impossible for her to continue as she is—so far as you are concerned. Surely it cannot be decreed that you—you to whom she is indebted for her life, should be the object of her—her—no, I do not think that it amounts to repugnance."

"It goes farther," said he. "It was repugnance at first; now it has broadened into indifference."

"I lose all patience when I think of it—the cruelty of it—the injustice of it! And yet she talked so sweetly to

her father—her father, who was responsible for all that she has suffered and is suffering!"

"Nothing that has happened has changed my feeling in regard to her," said he, in a low tone. "What did you tell me that she said to her father—that she was ready to make a fresh start? That is just what I am ready to do. A year and a half ago I was no more to her than I am now, and I won her love in the meantime; and if I did it once I should be able to do it again. I have a far better chance now than I had a year ago; for I I did not love her then, and I love her now. I tell you that I am not afraid. Her identity has not changed. She loves me and no one else. Her love for me is still deep down in her heart, and it is for me to bring it to life again, as she herself was brought back to life. That is what is before me, and I know that I shall succeed."

"You will succeed—oh, you must succeed. So gross an injustice would never be permitted," said Editha.

And then she went on to tell him of her plans for the next month or two. She was to take Olive home with her as soon as she was strong enough to travel. In spite of his ardent desire to assume the duties of the good father, Mr. Austin had told her that he was afraid it would be impossible for him to return to England at once. Since the lamentable accident certain symptoms had developed—he was not so young as he had been, and the long immersion on that terrible evening had played havoc with him. He would be forced to go for at least a fortnight to Homburg—a place which he detested; but alas! there was no help for it. But he knew that he might do his

duty in this matter without misgiving, being well assured of Lady Calthorpe's generosity and of her affection for Olive. Now if Lady Calthorpe could only continue to take charge of Olive on returning to England, she would be doing the most gracious and charitable action of her life. What it would mean to the girl herself Mr. Austin said he, for his part, shrank from suggesting. Would it not mean everything to her—everything—health, happiness, and a home? Had Lady Calthorpe thought of that, he wondered. Had she thought of the position of that unfortunate child, having no experience to guide her, being practically on a level with an infant opening its eyes on the world for the first time? What would become of her, he asked in impassioned tones, if she were not for some time to be under the care of a guardian who would sympathise with her and help her out of the many troubles which were undoubtedly in store for her? And where could she hope to find in all the world so sympathetic a guardian as Lady Calthorpe?

So he went on. He might have reserved all this eloquence for a real emergency; Lady Calthorpe had no idea of parting from Olive for some time to come, she assured him, and Mr. Austin shook her emotionally by the hand, saying:

"Gawbless you! Gawbless you! You are one woman in a thousand. You have saved my child for me, and I shall never forget that you have done so."

He went off the very next day, borrowing the money, goodness knows where, for the purchase of a valuable present for each of the doctors, and giving the hotel people a cheque which was subsequently dishonoured when presented for payment—by no means an isolated instance

of his banker's lack of confidence in the soundness of the security he offered for an overdraft.

In the course of another week Lady Calthorpe, with her husband and Olive, had left Lucerne for Calthorpe Place. Arthur Garnett did not travel with their party.

CHAPTER XII

EDITHA CALTHORPE had great hopes that Olive's return to the scene of so many happy days in her life would have a good effect upon her. She seemed to have an idea that the girl's brain was like a stopped clock, and that if the pendulum, speaking figuratively, could only be set vibrating it would continue to work. She felt that if Olive's memory were only to be stimulated to recall a single incident of the past, she would forthwith remember everything. But her hopes were certainly not realised during the drive from the railway station to Calthorpe Place, through four miles of charming sylvan scenery. If the human memory will retain anything it will retain the features of an English landscape, Lady Calthorpe believed. There was nothing so well worth remembering—of that she was assured. The waters of Babylon were undoubtedly impressive, but they only caused the exiles wandering on their banks to have more vivid remembrances of Zion. The mountains of Switzerland and the blue charm of the Mediterranean had never been able to take the place in her own memory that was occupied by the soft green landscape which smiled upon her the smile of an old servitor every time that she returned from abroad.

It was still smiling, though the season was autumn and

the billowy green of the woodlands was touched with gold and trimmed with russet. She watched Olive's face, and was scarcely able to conceal her eagerness, till she perceived that there was in her face no gleam of recognition of any feature of the landscape. She took delight in all she saw, but her expression was no different from that which had come to her when they had gone together through the Saas Thal.

"Does it bring nothing back to you, Olive?" she said, when the carriage was passing along the edge of Trebovir Court and the deer in the park lifted up their heads for a moment to watch it.

"Of course I know that those are deer; I love them and should like to feed them," replied Olive.

"You remember that—you remember feeding them?" said Editha, anxiously.

Olive shook her head.

"I see them, but I cannot associate any incident with them," she said. "I remember them only as I do Paris and London. I say they are deer—every one must have seen deer, just as I suppose every one must have seen Paris and London. But—that is all. I am a stranger in a strange land."

Lady Calthorpe sighed.

"Never mind," she said. "In another week or two you will be as familiar with every scene as you once were."

"I have no doubt of it," said Olive. "I am quite reconciled to the prospect of becoming acquainted with everything afresh. I promise you that, after a year or two, I shall have made up for all that I have lost. My mind will be a regular storehouse."

But when the carriage arrived at the beautiful old Tudor mansion, where the Calthorpes had lived since the days of the first baronet, and the butler had welcomed her back to Calthorpe Place—she responded to his welcome with great tact, though she had no recollection of having seen him before—Olive found herself going mechanically to the staircase and along the corridor to the left of the first floor, showing no tendency to mount any higher.

Lady Calthorpe watched her from the hall, greatly interested, and wondering if she would go straight to the room which she had occupied—it was on this corridor—when she had previously been a visitor in the house. She was undoubtedly going to this room, when it so happened that the housekeeper, coming down the corridor, met and greeted her, inquiring after her health and expressing in sympathetic tones (tempered by respect—housekeeper's respect, which is something very different from housemaid's respect) the hope that she was now on the way to complete convalescence. Olive responded very tactfully to her question—she had become very tactful, and mindful to treat no one as a stranger—and then the woman said:

"We are putting you in the Rosebud Room as usual, Miss Austin."

"Oh, thank you so much; it was delightful," said Olive.

"You remember the bough of the cedar that stretched out to the window and shut out the light, but you wouldn't have it trimmed?" continued the woman with the basket of keys, preceding her down the corridor. "Ah, you will see the difference!"

She threw open the door of a room and waited for Miss Austin to enter. Lady Calthorpe had come gently

up the stairs, and was now on the corridor ready to interpose should it be necessary, to save Olive from revealing her secret.

"I have never been in a more cosy room," cried the girl on entering.

"You notice what has been done, miss?" said the housekeeper, following her.

"Let me see," came the voice of Olive to the ears of Lady Calthorpe.

"I felt sure that you would have observed it at once," said the housekeeper, in a tone of surprise—respectful surprise.

Here Lady Calthorpe entered the room, saying:

"Here we are back again, Mrs. Glossop. Oh, so they lopped off the bough of the cedar, after all. You notice how light that corner is now, Olive? You can see the inlaying on the corner cupboard."

"It was bound to come, m'lady," said Mrs. Glossop. "But it wasn't lopped on purpose. It was a ladder that lopped it—a ladder that they brought to repair the coping. The work was done, and they were lowering it with a bit of twine that wasn't stout enough to tie up a newspaper with. Of course, it broke, and the ladder in its fall took the bough off as clean as a handsaw would do it. But it does make the room more cheerful, m'lady, there's no denying it."

"It was a mercy that no one was below the ladder when it fell," said Lady Calthorpe.

The housekeeper said, "A great mercy, m'lady," and left the room, closing the door gently as was her wont.

Olive laughed and flushed slightly.

"I hope that I did not give myself away," she said.

"You did very well. How did you know that she was the housekeeper?" said Lady Calthorpe.

"I knew that she was the housekeeper the moment I saw her, just as I knew that a horse was a horse," replied Olive. "I fear that I am becoming an accomplished actress."

"I was sorry when I heard her speak to you. I wondered if you would go immediately to your room—you went upstairs as if you remembered everything. You branched off at the right corridor. You might quite easily have gone to the upper rooms, or on to the prince's wing."

"I did not think about it in the least," said Olive. "I have no recollection of ever having been in this room before, and yet . . . I wonder if I should have come to it automatically."

"Try to find your way to the drawing-room when you have changed your dress," said Editha, going to the door.

Whether or not Olive would have gone automatically to the room on the first floor which she had occupied and was to occupy again, it was certain that she failed to find her way automatically to the drawing-room. She went downstairs in due course, but once in the hall she did not know in what direction to turn; and yet, when once there, after confessing her failure to her friend Editha, who had come upon her puzzled in the hall, she went straight to the only window in the room that opened upon the terrace, saying:

"May I take a stroll in the garden?"

Lady Calthorpe was puzzled at first. She said:

"Now how did you know that that is the one window that opens upon the lawn?"

Once more the answer came;

"I did not think about it in the least. I wished to go out to the garden and I simply went to this window. If you had told me that only one window opened in this way and asked me to find it, I believe that I would not have found it."

"I think that I begin to see what Dr. Haydon meant when he talked of automatic cerebration," said Editha. "I will not set you any problems of memory in the future. I believe that you will be able to do everything that you were accustomed to do long ago, if you refrain from asking yourself if you can do it and how."

And the adoption of this system seemed to be quite successful. Lady Calthorpe was amazed when, on saying to her after dinner that same evening, "Do play something for me, my dear," Olive went to the piano, opened it, and began to play a movement from a sonata of Beethoven, and, moreover, to play it with an amount of feeling such as Editha had never known her to impart to the same movement. Her performance was full of tenderness and spirituality, and thus there was about it none of the soulless precision of her French teacher's method. The girl played the work with precision, but she played it in her own voice, as it were.

When she arose from the pianoforte her face was flushed.

"I feel so much better—so much stronger through playing that," she said. "Oh, I cannot tell you how I felt—how I feel! I feel as if—as if—as if I were talking to some people who understood my innermost thoughts—people who somehow do not seem to be quite of this world."

"That is what it means to be a musician at soul," said Editha. "Music, when it is true music, has always seemed

"Olive went to the piano . . . and began . . . a movement from a sonata by Beethoven."

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to me a soul talking to a soul. Music is the mother-tongue of heaven. I have never heard that sonata played so beautifully. But it has excited you. You are scarcely strong enough yet. You must remember that excitement is not good for you just now."

"I am only excited because I felt for the moment that—that—I was outside myself," said the girl. "I felt that it was not I who played, but quite another person, and then I felt that I was at a distance, and yet the one who was seated at the piano was I myself."

"One feels that way sometimes in a dream," said Editha. "I think if there is any time when such an impression comes to one, it is either when one was playing oneself or listening to some one else playing. But the music must be—well, music."

"I have sometimes a feeling of being apart from myself, and it never was so strong as when I was at the piano just now," said Olive, slowly and thoughtfully, as if she was feeling her way from word to word—stepping on tiptoe from word to word. "I hear a voice speaking when I speak, and yet it does not seem to be my voice. I can think of what it says, criticise it quite impersonally, and sometimes I do not agree with what it says—that is the strangest part."

She was speaking in a low tone, and with great earnestness. Then she paused, and leaning forward, said in a lower voice still:

"Editha, I sometimes wonder if I am not one, but two."

"My dear child, do not say things like that," said Editha. She was slightly frightened. The idea suggested by Olive was strange—unnatural.

"I only try to tell you what has occurred to me once

or twice since I opened my eyes upon a new world," said the girl. "And really there does not seem any other way of explaining my impressions. I heard Dr. Haydon talking to Dr. Ritter when they were making notes about me, and discussing every point. 'Dual consciousness' was a term that they employed several times. It remained in my mind, though I could not understand what they meant by it, or by their talk about brain-cells and cerebration and things like that. 'Dual consciousness'—that means, does it not, that it is possible for one person to have two distinct sets of consciousness; and of course, since one's consciousness is oneself, it stands to reason that with two consciousnesses one has two selves."

"My dear, that is too psychological for me. It is like something I have read in a German treatise on metaphysics."

"But have you never felt that you were yourself and—and another?"

"Never just that. I don't like even to try to think of that, and I would not advise you to dwell too much upon it. In fact, I do not think that it is wise for you to dwell upon it at all. Of course, now and again one has a dream in which one sees oneself doing things; but dreams are dreams."

"But suppose one has such dreams when one is awake?"

"You cannot fail to have them if you continue thinking over mysterious things such as you have been talking about, my dear Olive. Take my advice, and when you find your mind turning in the direction of such matters, switch it on to something practical—something that does not require any particular thought."

"Yes, that would be wise, I think; only what would you do if your other self insisted on dwelling on these mysterious things and in talking about them?"

"I would get rid of that second self as quickly as possible; she is not a desirable companion."

Olive laughed.

"Perhaps she would not be got rid of so easily," said she. "And then there is always the question that comes to me: Is she myself, or am I?"

"That is exactly one of the questions of the German metaphysician," said Lady Calthorpe. "I have no notion of worrying out all that nonsense about the ego."

"What is the ego?" asked Olive.

"Heaven only knows; certainly the metaphysicians do not," said Lady Calthorpe. "And now I think that the sooner we get into bed the better it will be for ourselves. It is only in dreams that it is allowable to go into these mysteries of duality. It doesn't matter how bewildering one is when one is asleep."

"That sleep is the greatest mystery of all mysteries, and yet we give ourselves up to it without a thought," said Olive.

Then, as Lady Calthorpe rose from her chair, and the great blue Persian cat stretched himself, giving to his back the sensuous curve of the permanent way of a switch-back line, Olive laid her hand upon her friend's arm, saying:

"One thing I have been quite anxious to ask you for some time. Do you notice any difference in my character —my nature, since that—that thing happened—since my accident?"

"Not the least," said Editha, quickly. "You are just

the same as you always were; that is, so far as your nature is concerned. Of course, in some respects there is bound to be a difference—so much of one's life is dependent on one's memories. The past is linked to the present by memories; but with you—well, just now that link is broken. Only temporarily, however: the fractured link of the golden chain is being mended at the jeweller's."

"Who is the jeweller in my case?" asked Olive.

"Perhaps we had better call him Time," replied Lady Calthorpe. "Time, or Good Luck, or Love. Perhaps a limited liability company of jewellers in which all three are partners. But you must give them a chance, my dear; you must not let your mind dwell upon things that one's mind is apt to cling to in weak health. That is important."

"I am glad you think that the girl you are talking to now is the one to whom you were a friend long ago," said Olive. "I have been a little anxious in regard to this. Sometimes I have had my doubts. I have been oppressed by the thought that perhaps . . . ."

"That perhaps it is—the other one—that mysterious 'other one' who is the real Olive Austin who is my dearest friend?" said Editha, laughing, while she patted the cheek of the tall white-lily maiden who stood before her. "Don't let that thought oppress you. Any time that it comes to you, begin to sing a nursery rhyme, and give up all your attention to the singing of it. That is my advice to you just now, and you will find that it is the healthiest advice that you could receive, even though it does come from some one who abhors metaphysics and other brain-bewildering puzzles. You are you, and I am I, and we are both ourselves and nobody else."

Again she laughed, and after a moment or two Olive joined in her laugh, and they went up the staircase together.

At Lady Calthorpe's room they stood talking together for a minute or two, and another laugh passed between them before they parted.

CHAPTER XIII

BUT when Lady Calthorpe had passed out of the hands of her maid she did not laugh. What Olive had said to her left her with a certain feeling of uneasiness. It was quite clear to her that the girl was thinking a great deal—more than was good for her—about herself, and Lady Calthorpe knew that the less one thinks about oneself the better it is. She had heard that in perfect health one should be quite oblivious of the possession of any organ whatsoever; and she held that the same aphorism applies with equal force to a mental condition. If one is led to examine one's mind and its working in any but the most casual way, there is something wrong.

Olive had talked to her in the drawing-room in such a way as compelled her to believe that the girl's head was full of fantastic notions about herself. She had never been exactly as other girls. She had given evidence at Saas Fée of her possession of a faculty of premonition such as few of her kind were endowed with. The temperament which was susceptible of being affected by so mysterious an influence as that to which the name of premonition was given, was, as Lady Calthorpe had said to Dr. Haydon, likely to feel more deeply than an ordinary person the effects of so disturbing a catastrophe

as that which had befallen her. Those imaginings to which she had given expression on rising from the piano, were somewhat disquieting, as was also her playing of the sonata. But most of all was Lady Calthorpe disturbed by the grave way in which Olive had asked her if she was quite sure of her identity—if she was quite certain that the girl to whom she was talking was the Olive Austin who had been her dearest friend long ago.

What could this mean but that she had doubts herself on this point? Nay, she had admitted so much after receiving a very definite and reassuring reply to her inquiry.

It struck Editha Calthorpe, being herself the healthiest and the sanest of women, that any one who was capable of even thinking a thought on such a point must be in a perilous way.

But then, the whole condition of the girl could not be otherwise than disquieting, considering all that she had come through. The sudden annihilation of her memory was of itself sufficient to cause her mind to lose its balance for some time, at least.

And then suddenly there flashed upon Lady Calthorpe a recollection of that curious sound, the curious sighing, which she and her husband heard uttered three times in the room in the hotel just before Dr. Ritter had asked them to send for his colleague. At first the sound had come from a space near the window; the second had seemed to be above their heads, and then they both had that remarkable sense of something invisible moving rapidly past their faces, causing them instinctively to jerk their heads back an inch or two. It was a moth that had fluttered past them, Sir Everard affirmed; but she knew that he did not think that it was a moth.

What was it? she asked herself now.

She was unable to answer her own question. She became impatient with herself for having pursued such a train of thought as had ended in such a query. She was not a woman of many fancies, but . . . . she longed for her husband. It was very tiresome that he should be forced by business to remain in London for a couple of days instead of returning home with his wife. She longed for the presence of her two boys in the house. They had gone to the seaside as they usually did, early in July, and they were not to return before the end of the week. She hoped that no accident had happened to them. There were cliffs over which a child might easily fall—and then there was the danger of the sea. She had not told the nursery governess who had charge of them, that they were not to be allowed to take a boat. Their father had advised them to be as much in the boat as they could without prejudice to their studies or any building contracts they might enter into on the sands. That was so like a man! But if anything happened to them she would never forgive him—she would never forgive herself.

Her eyes were not quite dry when she threw herself on her knees beside her bed and prayed fervently for Heaven to take care of her little ones and bring them safe home to their mother's heart. She did not pray for her husband: he could look after himself.

She kept a light burning by her bedside all that night.

The next morning Olive was up half an hour before breakfast-time, and had gone out of doors, straying along the carriage drive where the avenue of elms mingled with the trees of the park. Following the broad sweep, with

the walled garden on one side and the green turf on the other, closely cut for a yard at the edge of the drive, she heard the bark of a dog—half a dozen dogs—and then there trotted round the curve a couple of setters, a retriever, a pair of fox-terriers, and an Irish terrier. The setters stopped for a moment, their muzzles in the air; the terriers began to bark; the retriever assumed a position of watchful neutrality. All at once the terriers bounded forward with extravagant signs of delight, and the setters followed, quivering with emotion, and murmuring ventriloquilly. The whole pack became exuberant. Every one of them recognised her, and made a demonstration which was rather embarrassing to her. She was responding by instalments, when a young man on horseback came round the curve of the shrubberies, and shouted at the dogs as he trotted up. The setters pretended to obey him, but the others were quite indifferent to his commands to come to heel.

Olive suspended her petting of the dogs, and she was resuming her walk; but he reined in, crying:

"My aunt, what's the meaning of this? What do you mean by cutting me dead? Whence this cold hauteur, lady? Have you found out that after all you are the daughter of a duke of the house of Brandenburg? Lie down, you brute!"

The inquiry he put to Olive. The command he gave to the Irish terrier, that was thoughtfully and tidily wiping his forepaws on her dress.

She looked up at him and smiled vaguely. He was clearly an old acquaintance, and should be treated as such.

"I did not expect to meet you here," she said. "Do you see how all the dogs remember me?"

"And you remembered them, and yet you were walking past me with your head in the air. Is thy servant a dog that you should do this thing? No, that's not the quotation. The one I want is just the opposite. Never mind. Give that brute a kick just to oblige me. What do you think of Mike since we fed him up? Great Jerusalem! you've forgotten Mike. Poor Mike! This is your reward for all the trouble you took to wipe every speck of dust off your paws and on her dress."

She had looked at the retriever instead of the Irish terrier when he mentioned the name Mike.

"I think that poor Mike remembers me but too well," said she, vaguely. "Are you going up to the house to see Lady Calthorpe? Sir Everard will not be back before the end of the week."

"What is the matter with you, anyway?" said he, after a pause. "You speak as if you had met me to-day for the first time in your life. Why this etiquette for the use of schools? I expect that the chill you got at Lucerne hasn't quite worn off. By the way, I hope you are all right again. I only heard of it a week ago. I think that Calthorpe might have dropped me a line, or Garnett. I didn't hear if he was home again. Did he come with you?"

"No; I think I heard Lady Calthorpe say that Mr. Garnett had left Lucerne two days before we did," said Olive.

The youth raised his eyebrows and gave a whistle.

"My aunt!" he exclaimed; "is it all off between you? I beg your pardon, Olive. I didn't mean to—to—oh, I can understand all now. I fancy that I had better ride home again with all convenient rapidity. I had no

notion that you and he . . . But these things are always happening. I am sure that it was his fault. Garnett is a good chap, Olive, if he is a bit stiff at times. Or was it your dad? Just like what your dad would do."

What could Olive do but hang her head and do her best to hide her confusion? But once she looked up from the head of the dog she was patting—the only one that remained with her; all the others were roaming about picking up strange scents, and pushing their muzzles under the lowest leaves of the shrubbery. She looked up, and a moment afterwards she said:

"Don't be annoyed with me, please. I am sure that I should know you, but I don't."

He laughed.

"I'm sorry that I have left my jewelled card-case at home, or I should hand my card," said he. "By the way, may I inquire whom I have the honour and felicity of addressing? I know your name, but I can't remember your face for the life of me; only I think that you are looking paler than when I saw you last."

"You would not make fun if you knew all that happened," she said quite pitifully. "A terrible thing happened: I was saved from death, but my mind was a blank. I did not know Lady Calthorpe when I recovered—I did not know my own father. And now, I am sure that we must have been good friends, you and I, but——"

He dismounted from his horse in an instant and stood beside her.

"This is not a joke? You are not trying to make a fool of me, Olive?" he cried. "By George, you're not! I can see that you are serious—dead serious. My dear

girl! I'm so sorry. I've heard of things like this happening, but I hardly believed it possible! I'm so sorry, Olive. Does the name Christy Carew not bring back anything to you? I'm Christy Carew. We have known each other since we were children, and I think that we were sorter pals. Oh Lord! to think that I should have to tell you this! But it is only for a time, isn't it? I saw a quotation from some magazine in the paper the other day, and it referred to cases like yours, and the memory always came back. I am sure that yours will come back all right."

"The chances are that it will," said she. "But if it doesn't—well, all that I can do is to begin again storing my mind. My great trouble is resuming my acquaintance with people just where it was broken off. Now with you, I am trying to talk as unrestrainedly as I should if nothing had happened; but I feel all the time that I am not natural—that I am only acting the part, and acting it very uneasily into the bargain."

He continued looking at her without speaking for some time. At last he said:

"It is so hard for a chap to take it all in! When I look at you and remember how much we have been together, it's jolly hard for me to think that I am a complete stranger to you. Do you mean to say that you have forgotten all about our climbs at Fée?"

She shook her head.

"All I know is that I am never so happy as when I am looking at mountains—that impression remained with me."

"And Arthur Garnett—did he appear to you as a stranger?"

"I saw him once at Lucerne. That was before I had quite realised that it was necessary for me to speak to the people whom I had known previously—before I had schooled myself to act before them as—as I am acting before you, for instance."

"And he seemed to you to be a stranger?"

"If I had had a chance of thinking out things as I have thought them out since, I am sure that I should not have been so horrid as I was in regard to him."

"You could not have been horrid to him."

"I was horrid; and the worst of it is that he was the only person whose voice I remembered hearing before, and the recollection of it caused me pain."

"How could that possibly be?"

"I can hardly explain."

"Even though you know that you are talking to an old pal?"

"I had just come back to life, and I felt more miserable than I can tell you—so dreadfully lonely; and I had had such a sense of complete happiness before."

"Before what?"

"Before I was brought back to life."

"And you bore Garnett a grudge for having rescued you?"

"Something like that, I suppose."

"It was rather hard on Garnett, wasn't it? But you have changed your views since then?"

"I have come to feel less miserable—less lonely."

"And in proportion as you feel comfortable you are disposed to forgive him for his interference?"

"I suppose that is putting the whole matter as reasonably as it is possible."

"And poets say that love is eternal! They are fearful liars."

Christy was moralising now into the ear of his horse, while running his fingers through the mane. Then he looked down to Olive, saying:

"If you haven't seen Garnett since that happened you are bound to think of him only as a stranger still?"

"I have not thought of him at all," said she. "It was only your mentioning his name just now that caused me to feel I should not have had such an aversion in regard to him as I fear I displayed. Is there anything more to be said about Mr. Garnett?"

"I suppose there is not," he replied. "At least, not just yet. But it is something to have got over your aversion, isn't it? I was hoping that the Calthorpes would give me breakfast. I rode across leisurely."

"Had you far to ride?" she asked.

"From home," he replied, as they began to walk together up the avenue.

She laughed, saying:

"Oh, from home?"

For a few moments he could not understand her laughter. He looked at her, and suddenly recollected what she had confided to him.

"What an idiot I am!" he muttered. "Of course, if you did not know who I was, you could hardly know how far away I lived."

"But the fact that I made you forget shows that I very nearly succeeded in taking up with you the threads of our former good fellowship where I dropped them, and that is something," said she.

And thus, with a pleasant exchange of laughter, they

went up to the house, and Lady Calthorpe, hearing them chat together in the old way, gave a joyful start. Was it possible that during the night Olive's memory had returned to her?

Although Olive shook her head in reply to the quick question put to her by her friend, Lady Calthorpe maintained that she must have some hidden recollection of Christy. It would have been impossible for her to get upon her old footing with him so easily, she affirmed, if she had come upon him as a complete stranger.

Olive did not argue out this point with her, or try to convince her that it was Christy's frank manner and utter disregard of formality and of restraint that brought her, as it did every stranger whom he met, on the friendliest terms with him before they had been talking together for more than a few minutes.

At breakfast Christy talked about Olive's loss of memory as if it was one of the most amusing occurrences possible to imagine. It was like being short-sighted, only much better; it enabled one to cut one's undesirable acquaintances. What a capital thing it would be for a chap who was pressed by his creditors! He would only have to swear positively that he had no recollection of buying any of the suits charged in the bill—Chris assumed that the man's chief creditors must be tailors—and there would be no use county-courting him. As for women—well, what a thing it would be for some of them to have all their inconvenient but obtrusive pasts annihilated!

It was also Christy who made a praiseworthy attempt to coach her in respect of the people whom she had met before in the neighbourhood, and whom she was certain to meet again the first time that she took her walks abroad. Lady

Calthorpe agreed with him that the nature of the consequences of Olive's accident should be kept a secret. They both saw clearly that, if it became known, the numbers of prying old maids—of whom there were quite a battalion in and about the village—who would make a point of coming to Calthorpe Place to satisfy their curiosity, would make her life unendurable, and probably lead to the greatest of all rural catastrophes—namely, the resignation of the staff of servants.

And in order to prevent her from giving herself away, he did his best to make her aware of the identities of some of the most prominent personages,—including the rector; the two doctors; the gentleman who had made the authorship of the *Letters of Junius* the study of his life, and could talk of nothing else; the gentleman who had once been Sheriff of Huntingdon, and expected every stranger to have a working knowledge of the duties which that eminent position entailed; the lady who had studied for the medical profession, and, having failed to qualify, had been living on her reputation ever since; and the two maiden sisters who professed the Mormon religion, even in regard to the doctrine of polygamy. Christy had something to say respecting the individuality of these worthies, whom he termed "our menagerie." With every one of them Olive had been acquainted, and it would be necessary for her to identify them, and to qualify for an occasional chat with them if she wished to appear her old self.

It may be stated that she proved so apt a pupil, that when she met the ex-High Sheriff that same day, and he asked particularly after her health, she took him for the doctor, and said that she would probably ask him for

an interview if she found that she was not getting strong so rapidly as she wished—a suggestion which frightened him so much that he left for London the next day. But this was not all, for when she met one of the doctors —the old-fashioned one who invariably wore a white cravat—she assumed that he was the parson, and inquired politely after his wife. The doctor had been a widower for twenty-five years!

Sir Everard returned in time to hear of the latter mishap, and being told of Christy's thoughtful prevision, said it would be ridiculous for Olive to burden her memory with a mass of details. There was a short cut to friendliness which had been invented by a great statesman with a bad recollection of faces. After shaking warmly by the hand a man whom he could not remember ever having seen before, he was accustomed to say:

"Well, how is the old complaint?"

If Olive would only inquire sympathetically after the old complaint, she would soon find herself on the friendliest terms with every one whom she met.

CHAPTER XIV

THE two boys—Everard, aged seven, and Bertram, aged five—returned in good spirits, and with many stories of the sieges of sand-castles and their capture at the point of the spade. They were delighted to see Olive again, and reminded her of the picnic in Aston Woods; the duck pond—Everard had been thinking about an incident that had some reference to a duck pond—had the green come off her dress yet? he inquired. Bertie was yelling out some question about how the donkey's tail was stuck on. It was not easy to evade these perpetual questioners. Her resources of tact well-nigh reached the breaking strain. At last she was compelled to drop reminiscences, on which she was not strong, and turn their attention to the future: she could talk of the future with the best of them. She found that they had laid plans and plans that would occupy their energies for months to come—the turning of cots into boats in the nurseries, and the making of a cave in the lumber-room, these were only two of the many enterprises which this young pair of prehistoric men had devised. They found a most sympathetic listener in Olive, when the topic referred to the future.

But Bertie, on the day after his return, developed a relaxed throat—a trifling thing due to the change of air—and his mother treated him for it. Before going to bed she

visited the nursery, and found him sleeping peacefully. Still, she was uneasy, for Bertie had once had croup and had been at death's door; so, awaking an hour after midnight, she put on a dressing-gown and went again to his cot. He was breathing so easily, she did not think it necessary to arouse him in order to touch his throat with the tannin and glycerine which she had at hand.

On returning through the silent corridor she had to pass the door of Olive's room. When just beside it she fancied that she heard a sound as of the motion of something within the room—such a sound as would certainly have escaped her by day, lost among the ordinary noises of the house; but through the silence of the night it was distinct. It seemed like the passing of a breath of air through the light leaves at the top of an aspen. There was a curious sibilation in it—a strange whisper as of some one speaking in the very lowest tones in a room where a child is sleeping.

She stood beside the door listening, and she became aware of the fact that the whisper varied both in volume and as to the direction whence it came. Once while she waited it seemed to be close to the door. It was not monotonous, nor was it constant. It rose and fell like the breathing of a sleeper, though not for a moment did Lady Calthorpe take it to be this, for its increase lasted for ten or fifteen seconds, and in the course of this space it seemed to pass across the room.

Leaning forward so as to be as close as possible to the door, she fancied that she noticed a light coming through the space at the edge of the door due to the slight shrinking of the wood. The light was not anything like so powerful as would come from even a single candle

within the room. It was the merest phosphorescence, such as might be due to the striking of a sulphur match on the wood. She thought it curious that it should become extinguished at times. It gave her the impression of some one carrying a faint light past the door.

She waited, wondering, and not without a sense of something happening outside her ordinary experience; for that sound which was moving about the room, was as mysterious as the light which now and again sent a pale glimmer—a thin thread of phosphorescence—out into the darkness of the corridor.

And while she stood there, she felt upon her face a quick brush of air, just as she had experienced in that room in the hotel at Lucerne; and it seemed to her that the sound which had come from the other side of the door, was now above her head. It was not the sigh which she had heard on that dreadful night at Lucerne; it resembled more closely the rustling of a water-flag.

All at once she seemed to hear not one of these sounds, but several. The darkness was full of them. The darkness? She became sensible of the fact that the darkness was no longer supreme. Here and there her eyes caught a faint suggestion of a moving light; not a point of light, but a thin, vaporous, and luminous film, hovering far away—she could not tell how far.

A curious fear came upon her. She almost rushed up the corridor and through the door of her bedroom. She was trembling when her husband awoke and asked her what was the matter. She clung to him, and could not speak for some time. At last she managed to say:

"I think I have been foolish. I was frightened at something I heard—something I saw—mysterious! It

seemed mysterious, but I daresay it is as simple as anything can be; I could not understand it—it seemed mysterious."

"A sound and a light—in one?—where?" he asked.

"The sound came from Olive's room, and the light—I thought I saw it shine through the edge of the door. But afterwards it was on the corridor; faint—fainter than any light ever seen—more like the reflection of a light on something vaporous."

"Olive may have lit a candle to read by. Did you call through the door to her?" asked Sir Everard.

"No, no; it was not that. A candle is ten times as strong as that, and a candle would be fixed—steady."

"Shall I have a look? It will not take me a minute. I may be able to find out something."

"Leave the door open," she said, as he groped for his dressing-gown.

He went out, and she heard his muffled footfalls on the carpet as he walked down the corridor. He returned after a few breathless minutes had passed. He had seen nothing; he had heard nothing. He suggested that perhaps Olive had been sleeping uneasily when Editha had been at her door. He feared that she was still far from strong. As for the light—well, perhaps one of the grooms had been carrying a stable-lantern across the front of the house; one of the horses might have something the matter with it—goodness knows what. He would make inquiries in the morning. How was Bertie's throat?

Editha replied that Bertie had been sleeping quietly, and she did not think that there was any need to disturb him. She added, after a pause, that it was quite possible that her husband was right in his explanation of the

sound and the light. She knew, she said, that when one did anything unusual, everything associated with the act seemed unusual.

He recognised the good sense of her view of the matter. That was what made her the most delightful woman in the world to live with. She had no whims. She was always ready to accept his explanations. A woman who is always ready to accept her husband's explanations is the right sort of woman to live with. She makes life so easy. After all, life is nothing but a more or less connected series of explanations.

He went to sleep quite comfortably.

Editha was not quite so prompt. Like all good women, she mistrusted everything that was outside the range of her own experience, or that was at least outside the range of the creed which she had been taught to believe since her childhood. In religion, in science, and in sense, a precise limit had been set to her belief, and she had not hitherto found this limitation too limited. There was plenty of room for healthy exercise within its circumference. She thought of it as Wordsworth did of his sonnet. She had found it quite comfortable.

But now she felt that she had come in contact with something that was outside the boundary assigned to her belief, and she was consequently uneasy and unable to sleep. What clung most tenaciously to her mind was all that Olive had said to her respecting the strange duality to which she had confessed. The very thought of the possibility of such a separation of body, soul, and spirit was disquieting. . . . And then she tried to quiet her mind by inventing an explanation of what she had seen and what she had heard. She was not eminently successful.

. . . The breathing of one in heavy slumber—the gleam of a stable-lantern? Oh no!

In the morning she found that she was anticipated by Olive in her visit to Bertie in the nursery. The little boy had become himself again. There was no trace of inflammation in his throat. Olive was exercising her veterinary skill on an ailing member of the nursery stud. The tail of a pony—long, wavy, voluptuous—had come off, and a delicate surgical operation was necessary for its restoration. Olive was in consultation with him on this point when his mother entered the nursery. For a moment Lady Calthorpe had a strange experience. She felt an impulse to snatch up her child and take him away from the girl. The pang of which she was conscious may have been the same as the one which the mother feels when her son tells her that he is about to get married.

Of course, so unreasonable a feeling only lasted for a second or two; then she was in a condition to appreciate the attention of the girl in regard to the child. Going downstairs to breakfast, she asked Olive how she had slept.

"I could not have slept better," Olive replied "I had a dream, but not an unpleasant one. I found myself wandering over a house, and looking at pictures in one room and at tapestries in another. I wasn't there as a stranger; I might have been living in the place. The tapestries were quite beautiful. One was of a battle—a great black horse in the foreground with a man in armour in the saddle. The helmet had a falcon on it, and three plumes, black and white and crimson. Another showed a woman on a high tower—the tower of a castle—and men with cross-bows were beside her taking aim at an army in the field below."

"And the pictures?" said Lady Calthorpe.

"Oh, family pictures," replied Olive. "There was a sort of raised gallery at the entrance to the room, with three or four steps down to the floor. On pedestals at each side stood great gilt candelabra, with a dozen branches for candles. The pictures—the walls were covered with them. Over the fireplace there was a boy with a greyhound—a boy with a blue silk doublet and a quilted cap of the same colour—quite lovely! At the end of the room, looking from the gallery, were two long pictures full of colour and brightness—a woodland in each, with beautifully dressed people dancing. There was a flock of sheep in one of the pair, and ribbons decorated the lambs."

"Delightful dream!" said Lady Calthorpe. "And what about the people who lived in the house? Did you come upon any of them?"

"I seemed to be there alone," replied Olive. "I somehow did not appear to expect to meet any one. I wandered from room to room, as if the place were my own. I remember how I stood for a long time by the side of a marble fountain in the hall—white, with nymphs playing among water-flags."

"It did not awaken any memory, seeing the decorations of this house? You could not recall when you had seen the place before?"

"It seemed quite natural for me to be there," said Olive "But when I awoke in the morning, and thought over it all, I had not the faintest impression of having ever before seen anything that was there."

After breakfast, Editha said to her husband, when they were strolling through one of the greenhouses:

"Olive told me just now that she had a dream last

night, of visiting a large house. She described some of the rooms and their decorations, and in doing so she described King's Croft."

"That was rather queer, was it not?" said Sir Everard. "Did she describe Garnett's place generally, or deal with particulars?"

"She referred to the drawing-room, with the gallery and the steps, and Lely's picture of Oswin Garnett when a boy, and the two big Fragonard's *Fêtes Champêtres* at the end."

"Heavens above!"

"And the fountain in the hall—the tapestry of the *Siege of Troy* and that of the *Defence of Pevensey*—every detail she had before her."

"I do not remember if she was ever there before, when she was staying with us in the spring."

"Never—she was never there in her life."

"She could scarcely have been there without our hearing of it."

"How would it have been possible? She never went anywhere unless in my company, either when she was here in the spring or last autumn."

"I daresay Garnett told her about his place some of those days among the mountains."

"Would it be like him to do so?"

"No; I allow that it would not be like him. Arthur Garnett is no Claude Melnotte, to brag about his castle by the Lake of Como. But if he didn't——?"

"I don't know what to say. If I were not so fond of her I could almost wish that—that——"

"That you had not shown yourself to be so anxious to take charge of her? My dear Editha, whom would

the poor girl have gone to? Can you think of her in the hands of her father at such a time as this?"

"No, no. I saw my way clearly from the first; but . . . I did not tell you all that she said to me when we were alone on the evening of our return. It made me feel a little nervous, I confess."

"What did she say?"

"Something uncanny about how she sometimes feels herself apart from herself—watching herself doing things—something like that; at least, that was the impression which her words left upon my mind. She said that she sometimes felt uncertain whether the figure which she watched doing things was her real self, and asked me if I was quite convinced that she was now the same girl as had been my friend before the accident—if I thought that her nature was the same. Can you wonder that I longed for your return?"

"I daresay she may have a queer notion or two just now. Think what she has come through—is she through it all yet?"

"It is one thing to have a queer notion or two, but quite another to—to—— How was she able to tell me in detail the leading features of a house that she has never seen?"

"And she did not know that she was describing King's Croft?"

"She had not the remotest idea. She merely told me, smiling—I had asked her how she had slept—that she had had a dream, and then went on to talk about it in the casual way that ordinary people talk about the dreams they have."

"You did not tell her that she had been describing Arthur Garnett's house?"

"Not I! I did not wish to encourage her. Can you understand how I felt in this respect? I want to discourage her fancies. That is why I ridiculed her gravity in talking of that sub-division of identities—that dual consciousness. If I had told her that she had just done a most mysterious thing in describing the contents of a house which she had never seen, she might be led on to dwell upon the mysterious things she has been talking about."

"Quite so. I think you showed great tact. I wonder what would be the best way to go about discouraging your dwelling upon these mysterious things. It struck me very forcibly last night that you have been thinking about these things more than is good for you."

"That is quite true; the truth is, that having all my life been accustomed only to the commonplace, straightforward, ordinary things that happen to plain people like ourselves, I am quite unprepared for anything else. And you must allow that some of our experiences of late have been far from ordinary."

"Nothing that has happened is in any marked degree mysterious, except that dream business."

"What? Nothing? Did you find out if a groom was out with a stable-lantern last night?"

"Oh, that? I wouldn't bother much about that if I were you. We must remember, to begin with, that the girl who is in the house with us is in a phenomenal condition. It is impossible to believe that her brain is just yet capable of working as the brains of ordinary people do. It is all a question of the working of the brain. Both those doctors are modern scientific men, and they are acquainted with all that the most recent

research has brought to light. If you get to think of all that there seems to be uncanny—mysterious—about Olive Austin, from this standpoint, the standpoint of the brain-cells, you will be all right. Everything in nature is very mysterious until it has been explained. Good heavens! to think that a pressure not greater than that of a feather upon a portion of the brain, may change one from a Herbert Spencer to—to a Winston Churchill! I don't want any greater mystery than that."

"Neither do I, I am sure; I would be content with one very much less. Oh, if she had only forgotten everything else and remembered Arthur Garnett, it would have mattered nothing. I really did think that she would remember him."

"She did remember him—that was the cruellest part of this mysterious trick of the brain-cells."

Sir Everard cut the tip off a cigar which he took out of his case, and felt for his match-box. Editha watched him curiously for some time, as though she had never before seen him perform the operation. He found his match and struck it, and lit his cigar. He watched the steady light between his fingers.

"That is the greatest mystery of all," he said, holding up the burning match. "To think that for thousands of years there was no such thing in the world as a fire. To think that for as many thousand years people worshipped that as a god, that temples were built for housing it, that tribes were set apart to preserve it, and that the person who let it go out was killed! Why, only a year or two ago people had nothing better than a flint and steel, and yet now——"

He dropped the last spark on the tiles of the green-

house, and set his foot on it with the firmness of a man crushing a god.

Editha bent her head toward him, and said in a whisper:

"Everard, do you think that she was actually dead?"

CHAPTER XV

SIR EVERARD gazed at her for some intense moments. Then he rose from the wicker chair on which he was seated and began to pace the tiles. He resumed his seat after a while, and said:

"I cannot understand how that curious notion came into your head."

"I suppose it came to me in the same way that it came to you," she replied. "You asked yourself that question more than once. I wonder if you have found an answer to it."

"Common sense and common science—the two should go hand-in-hand, but they don't always—give the answer to such a question," said he, after an interval the duration of which was very unsatisfactory to himself, for it diminished greatly the force of what he had to say about sense and science; a man who wishes to be forcible should always be able to make a pat reply, even to his wife. "There must have been a spark of what we call life in the girl; the artificial respiration was simply like fanning that spark."

"I lay awake last night thinking of that," said Editha.

"Then you did a very foolish thing, my dearest. I had a feeling that you were in a highly nervous condition. You should have left the light burning in the corridor.

It was your switching it off that made you imagine things."

"It was not the artificial respiration that brought back life to her. It was the voice of Arthur Garnett. Remember that it was not science—it was love."

"If science had not first brought her back to consciousness, the voice of love would have called in vain, Editha. I admit that Glück's *Che Farò* is a masterpiece, but——"

"But what?"

"We are in the twentieth century of the Christian era. The light of science——"

"Radium is a light of science; and yet all science up to the day of the discovery of radium was a negation of the possibility of radium."

"That's true, though you did read it in some newspaper."

"You know that all I know about science is not worth talking about. But I know enough to be aware of the fact that what science denies to-day it admits to-morrow. What would the science of a few years ago have said to any one who affirmed that a thought of the mind was a displacement of matter? I told you that I overheard Dr. Haydon and the Swiss discussing that theory. What light has science thrown upon the soul?"

"My dear, it was a great German philosopher who gave us the last word about the soul. He said, you'll remember, that it is as impossible for the soul to exist without the body as it is for a centre to exist without a circle. But what does all this science-and-philosophy talk lead to? What were we chatting about?"

"About the possibility, without going against the Bible,

of Olive Austin's having crossed the narrow line which separates—if there is any separation—the two worlds."

"My dear Editha!"

"My dear Everard, we have come to admit the possibility of many things which we were taught in our schooldays to regard as impossible—impious even to think about. Think of heat without combustion, of the invention of Signor Marconi, of the science of telepathy. I have been thinking of these things a great deal since Olive told me at Fée that she had now and again had premonitions, such as the one respecting the safety of Arthur; and the result is that—that—I don't know what to think."

She laughed rather uneasily, and made an expressive gesture with her hands, throwing them out from her and extending her fingers—a gesture that suggested an open mind, but a greatly perplexed mind.

"Neither do I know what to think," said he. "What is left for simple folk like ourselves to think, when we are suddenly brought face-to-face with something that is quite outside the experience of any but a few persons? I allude, of course, only to the annihilation of the girl's memory. To be sure, that is only a phenomenon; it is not supernatural. I think that between us we have done very well in regard to this particular thing; I am sure that we are not called on to consider the supernatural aspects of such an accident. In heaven's name, let us accept with gratitude any theory of brain-cells that may be offered to us to account for all that has not been explained."

He threw away the end of his cigar and sprang to his feet.

"I have to put a new spring to the inlet valve of the machine," said he. "I saw a chap at the Automobile

Club a couple of days ago who gave me a good tip about asbestos packing."

The modern man who kept himself abreast of the latest movements of the world, with which he was associated by many ties, turned up the cuffs of his jacket. Before leaving the conservatory, he looked toward his wife and said:

"My dear woman, I'm beginning to believe that no force in the world is absolutely calculable, except the mechanical powers—the lever and the inclined plane."

"They are at any rate the most important to take into account in the driving of a motor," said his wife, pinching off a decayed leaf from one of the chrysanthemums.

That same afternoon Arthur Garnett rode across from King's Croft to Calthorpe Place. Editha had written to him, letting him know that she had returned to England, and that Olive was with her. For some days, in addition to her perplexity on the subject of the soul of Olive Austin, she had been asking herself how long Arthur would be satisfied to remain a probationer, so to speak, in respect of the hand of this same young woman. Would he be content to wait passively for the return of the love which she had once given to him, or would he set about the rather difficult task of re-wooing her?

She had agreed with her husband that Arthur was a man to be depended on. That was her opinion at the time when she and her husband had referred to this particular matter. But later on she began to ask herself if any man was to be depended on in like circumstances. The case of Olive Austin and Arthur Garnett was practically unique. No precedent was available to assist her in coming to a conclusion on this point.

Should a man consider himself bound to a young woman who had at one time responded to his affection for her, but who had since lost all consciousness of having done so, and become indifferent to him? That was a nice question, and it was susceptible of being answered in various ways, according to the temperament or the training or the sophistry of the one who might be appealed to for a reply.

But after all, she reflected, the question was not one of a man's trying to evade a responsibility. Even if the girl had no longer any love for him, he remained steadfast in his love for her, and he had no more fervent aspiration than to be once again on his old footing in respect of her.

Yes; but what Editha Calthorpe wanted to know was, how long would this aspiration last with a man who found that the girl was as indifferent to him as if she were quite another girl? It was this suggestion, involving the thought not merely of a change of affection, but of an absolute change of identity as well, that troubled Lady Calthorpe; for it caused her to think, more than she had done before, of those singular apprehensions which Olive had expressed in respect of herself. She could not forget how earnest Olive had been in describing her impressions—that strange impression of being at times away from herself, capable of looking on and being impersonally interested in herself as if she were watching quite another person. What would Arthur Garnett's position be if he found, when he succeeded in getting Olive Austin to marry him, that he had married some one who was not Olive Austin, but quite another woman?

In this curious atmosphere of perplexity, of startled

nerves, of vague apprehension of the appalling, Editha had been living for some days. She was a woman of imagination, but in these days she went much farther and became an imaginative woman. Notions of which she had long dispossessed her mind returned to her. Like most healthy and natural women, she had never given much attention to what she had heard called the spirit world. She was not greatly interested in anything mystical, or even mysterious. She liked Longfellow's poetry.

But now she found herself standing, with an occasional shiver, on the brink as it were of a great chasm, from whose depths rolled waves of formless vapour, through which she peered, wondering what was on the other side. Her sympathy for Olive was not diminished; but it now had an element of nervousness in it. She was in a position to appreciate the feelings of the man who loved an elf queen, of the man who loved a beautiful creature but had his suspicions that she was pretty high up in the witch world.

This was the condition in which she found herself when Arthur rode up to the house.

She was sitting with Olive on the seat which was set in a line of clipped yews on the terrace above the garden, working at a piece of embroidery that contained some rich colouring—yellow gold, interwoven with sapphire blue and enwreathed with ruby. She laid down her work and rose when he dismounted at the nearest point of the carriage drive. She watched Olive when he approached her. Olive's face had not changed its expression or its colour for a moment. There was no flush on her forehead—no lovelight in her eyes. She shook hands with him without constraint, and told him that she was quite well.

A groom had taken away his horse, so he strolled across the terrace and praised the late dahlias. He talked chiefly to Lady Calthorpe—about the boys first, and Sir Everard next, as was befitting—about the journey from Lucerne. Here he had a chance of inducing Olive to join in the chat. He asked her if she missed the mountains at which she had been gazing daily from the windows of the hotel; she replied that at first she found herself daily going to a window in whatever room she was sitting, expecting to look out upon Mont Pilatus; but now she was reconciled to the broad pasturage before her eyes.

It was quite natural for Lady Calthorpe to rise at this point, with a word or two about wondering if Miss Hilliard, the nursery governess, feared that Bertie's throat could not stand the afternoon out-of-doors; but surely on so mild a day . . . . She left Olive and Arthur together.

He looked at her, smiling.

"Have you got over your aversion to me yet?" he asked.

"I believe that I was quite rude to you," she said. "I was weak. I must have startled you."

"I should have been more startled if I had not been so delighted to see you sitting there alive—I could only think of your being alive. Even now my thoughts can scarcely go beyond that point—you are alive. But still, I should be glad to hear that you have got over your aversion to me."

"Oh yes," she said with some slowness, and as if measuring her words; "indeed, I have no such feeling in regard to you. Lady Calthorpe told me of all that you had done for me, so I feel grateful. You saved my life."

"It was a selfish act," said he. "You see, I looked

on your life as *my* life—something more than my own life. But you made use of the word 'grateful'; from that I know that you have not yet regained your recollection of me. If you had done so you would not have made use of that word."

"I have only a recollection of hearing your voice call to me. It was your voice that brought me back."

"That was why you bore me a grudge on that day when I went to your room in the hotel."

She did not respond.

"At that time you said something about being on a causeway—a white causeway." Her face brightened up. "Is it possible that that meant you had some distant memory of my pointing out the White Causeway to you when we were together among the mountains?"

She shook her head slowly.

"That is all lost to me," she said. "The mountains and all are wiped out of my mind. The causeway that I know is one that stretches from a valley up to some white height. It seemed the beginning of all joy to be on it; and it was your voice that called me back."

"You still bear me a grudge, I can see," said he.

"Oh, no," she said, but without any quickness of repudiation. "Oh, no; I thought at that time that I should be lonely—that I had lost all happiness for ever."

"And you naturally blamed me for it? But now—what do you think now?"

"I suppose that I have learned to fall into line with the rest of the world, and to find happiness in looking forward."

"You will have a chance of looking at everything with

unprejudiced eyes. Experience means prejudice. You will find yourself liking everything that you were accustomed to like—loving those whom you loved."

"Shall I?"

"I hope so—I pray so. How can you help it? You are the same girl that you always were."

"Am I? You don't think it possible that what happened may have changed me—changed me into quite a different person?"

"Natures do not change in that way. You are yourself."

"I suppose that I am bound to be myself. But I wonder if I can properly claim to be the girl whom you knew last year—whom you knew before you went to Lucerne. I now and again feel that I am an imposition, living here with Lady Calthorpe—talking here with you. It seems to me sometimes that I am simply a stranger come in the form of Olive Austin, who disappeared one night at Lucerne. I have a sense of guilt—a sense of imposture."

He laughed—after he had collected his thoughts.

"That is not how you should feel," he said. "There is nothing in the situation of the moment that should lead you to feel in this way. I cannot see how you acquired so queer a notion."

"I think that a person is what one's memory has made one," said she. "It is not simply a question of flesh and blood; the person is quite apart from such considerations as flesh and blood. People like one another irrespective of such considerations."

"And people may like one another, even though one of them may have lost all recollection of their first meeting," said he. "Has not Editha Calthorpe shown

that she is as fond of you as ever? Do you fancy that anything that has happened has decreased my affection for you, Olive?"

She flushed slightly, with her eyes turned toward the ground. After a few moments of silence she looked at him. There was a certain sadness in her eyes; he saw the tears creep up to them and overflow.

"My poor child," he said. "I have been too sudden in referring to this matter, but I could not help it; every moment only makes me more assured of myself. When your memory comes back to you—and it surely must come back to you—you will find that I am unchanged."

Her tears were falling now; she made no attempt to wipe them away.

He moved an inch or two nearer to her on the old stone seat among the yews.

"I wonder what is on your mind," he said. "Tell me all that you are thinking of. Perhaps I may be able to help you to see things more clearly."

"There never was anything sadder," she said, and a sob choked her.

"Sadder than what? I should like to know what is sad," he cried.

"Nothing is sadder to me than the thought that if I were the true Olive Austin I could not but respond to your devotion. How could I remain as I am now, cold and unmoved, when you tell me that, in spite of everything, you have not changed toward—toward Olive Austin? I hear you, I see you, and yet I cannot think of you as—as Olive Austin thought of you."

"Well, my dear Olive, cannot you see that it is just because you are Olive Austin in nature and in temperament

that you feel toward me as you do?" said he, laying a hand upon one of hers. "More than a year had passed since we first met before I was assured that I loved you; and I believe that when I told you I loved you I took you by surprise. Well, this is only the second time that you have seen me since that day when I entered, a stranger to you, the room where you were lying. Do you think that I am unreasonable enough to expect you to be otherwise than indifferent to me? It may be a year before love comes back to you. I would not have it forced; if it comes back in a year I will be quite satisfied."

"It seems hopeless," she said. "Editha said that I succeeded in taking up our old friendship at the point when it was interrupted, and I liked Sir Everard from the moment I saw him at the hotel at Lucerne. I managed to get on the same terms with Christy Carew, but this was only because I had become observant and forced myself to act in sympathy with their bearing toward me. But with regard to you it is different: it seems hopeless; I have no longing to be with you as I—as Olive Austin was in the old days. It seems impossible that I should ever love you. It is incredible to me that I should ever have loved you. It is my thinking this that makes me feel that you are mistaken in coming to me now."

"That is exactly what you would have said to me a year ago, if I had come to you the second time we met to tell you that I loved you," said he. "I am sure that you did not love me the second time we met. I know that I thought you cold—unresponsive; though now that I come to reflect upon it, I do not think

that you had anything to respond to. I was attracted to you, but I did not love you. Now what I want of you is to be always frank with me. I do not want you to get the idea that you are bound to me in any way. I do not want you to say that you love me unless you feel that you do love me. I do not want you even to try to love me: the love that comes from trying to love is too like duty to be the real thing. I should be unhappy if you were never to love me, but much more unhappy if you were to feel that you were bound to me by any old tie."

"All this means that you regard me as quite another girl than the Olive Austin whom you knew long ago—two months ago."

He did not answer her at once. He seemed to be considering this suggestion from every standpoint.

"Well, let it be so," he said slowly. "I do not at all object to that assumption. I want to get you to love me—you, mind you, yourself whom I see before me now."

"You do not mind being unfaithful to the Olive Austin whom you knew long ago?"

"Not in the least," he said with a laugh. "Because I shall know when you come to love me, that you will part with that perplexing notion of being different from the Olive of two months ago. The moment that you come to love me you will feel that you are the same. There will be no doubt in your mind."

There was a touch of sunshine in her face when she said:

"I shall be happy then; but I fear——"

"You must fear nothing," he cried. "You must fear

nothing except the possibility of your thinking that it is your duty to love me. If you get into that way of thinking love will never come. Now we know exactly how we stand in respect of each other, and that is something. Here comes Editha with her boy."

Lady Calthorpe wished to say that tea would be ready in five minutes. She carefully refrained from casting at either of them the glance of inquiry which was in her heart, so to speak. It was her exercise of these little reticences that endeared her to her friends. She had her eyesight under perfect control at all times. She could, by the exercise of a little judgment, abstain from seeing something that was going on directly before her—something that an ordinary woman would not only see, but turn into a topic on the instant.

But she did not fail to notice that Arthur Garnett was in good spirits—not the garrulous high spirits which indicate a heart that is ill at ease, but the natural brightness of the man with whom things are going as well as could be expected.

"Matters are as well as can be expected," said Lady Calthorpe to herself.

And that is just what Arthur Garnett thought when riding home in the dusk.

CHAPTER XVI

IT was quite like Olive Austin to confide in her friend Editha on the subject of Arthur's visit. She told her what he had said and what she felt. Confidence could go no farther.

And then Editha confided to Olive her steadfast belief that everything was coming right, even though Olive had assured her, with intermittent tears, that she could not foresee the arrival of a day when Arthur would be anything more to her than he was at the moment of her talking to her friend.

"That's another favourable symptom," said Lady Calthorpe, smiling at the girl's bewilderment.

"Favourable? Then what would be an unfavourale symptom?" cried Olive.

"The absence of mournfulness on your part when you tell me you cannot think that Arthur Garnett will ever be nearer to you than he is at present," said Editha. "My dear, the vagaries of love have at all times and among all peoples formed the most appropriate subject for treatment in a vein of comedy, and surprise, with an element of paradox sometimes, is the very heart of comedy, if satire is its soul. Take my advice, my dear Olive; do not become mournful because you fail to hear the pattering of the feet of love outside your door. The little boy with the bow

does not always patter with naked feet on the parquet; he has wings—sometimes he flies in by your window, so that you do not hear his approach in the least. Above all things, I entreat you not to try to hear the sound of his footfalls. Do not wait up for him. The girl who waits up expecting him to come in response to her invitation is as great a goose as the wife who waits up for her husband when he is dining with his friends at a club. That's all I have to say to you."

Olive smiled, then laughed. Her smile was mournful, but her laugh had a ripple of mirth on its surface. Editha thought that it was the laugh of the girl who looks out of her window and sees shivering in the cold a chubby cherub of a boy, trying to reach the knocker with one horn of his bow—a dainty picture, with a suggestion of comedy in the child's chubbiness, which makes the girl laugh; and a hint of pathos in his nakedness in the chill air, which makes the girl wistful a moment afterwards.

Olive became wistful a moment after laughing. Editha Calthorpe was satisfied.

Arthur came to lunch a few days later, and the little flush which gave to Olive's face the aspect of being in the shadow of a rosebush, made him joyous, even while his host talked of rural councils and the woman candidate. Olive more closely resembled the girl she had been than she had yet done within the month. Lady Calthorpe feared that she was trying to be to him what she thought he expected her to be. She had succeeded very well in this respect with Christy, and now it seemed that she was as happy in regard to Arthur. But Lady Calthorpe hoped that she would not continue this exercise of tact.

It hinted at a sort of artificial respiration treatment of love, and Lady Calthorpe had her doubts about the efficacy of this system in its application to a love that had lost its memory.

That was why she thought it better to be by the side of either Arthur or Olive all this day. Arthur thought her curiously tactless this day, compared with what she had been upon the occasion of his previous visit.

"Don't you think that she might show me the chrysanthemums in the greenhouse?" he whispered, when the autumn afternoon was getting a little shabby over the trees of the park; it was not wearing well as evening approached.

Editha shook her head.

"Not to-day," she said, in a low voice. "I think that it is better for me to show you the chrysanthemums. Come along."

Of course, he pulled himself together, and gave her to understand that he wished for nothing better than to be piloted through the greenhouse by her.

"My gracious guide," he said graciously, opening the door for her. Sir Everard and Olive showed no sign of following them.

"I mean to be your guide," she said. "I want to prevent you from fancying that there is anything satisfactory in her pleasant bearing toward you to-day."

"What? Is she not more like her real self than she has been since her accident?" he cried. "I am delighted—have I not reason?"

"Do not be deceived," said she. "The poor girl has become so tactful—so alert—of late, that she can tell after meeting some one the degree of friendliness that

existed between them last year. She was able to respond to Christy Carew, and now she is making an effort on your behalf. You do not want her to make an effort, Arthur?"

"That is what I implored her never to do," he said. "Good heavens! I do not wish her to love me because it would be so hard on me if she did not."

"Of course you don't, but I fear for her. That is why I took you from her just now, and that is why I wish you to be formal for the remainder of the day. She has imagination, and imagination is like strong coffee to love—it keeps it awake. For the next day or two she will think how much pleasanter this afternoon would have been if you and she had been left together. That is what she expected; but it is not to happen, and, take my word for it, she will look forward to your next visit with something allied to eagerness."

"I had no idea that you could look at matters in this philosophical—this academic way," said he, and he was certainly surprised. "I see already what you hope to accomplish on my behalf, and I also see how true is your instinct in this matter. But if she feels inclined to like to be near me, does not that mean that she—that there is a spark of love lurking somewhere in her heart?"

"Oh, say the brain—the brain—every scientific man will tell you that one loves with the brain, not the heart," cried Lady Calthorpe, with a rapier-flash of scorn. "The brain does everything nowadays. All her affection for you existed in her brain, and unfortunately it was in the cell that has got twisted. But I think that we shall teach the scientific man that love can re-awaken, even though the brain where it was located is still eclipsed."

Arthur said nothing; but the scorn displayed by Lady Calthorpe was delightful to him. It was so womanly. The word heart is one that women will hold on by in the face of philosophy and the modern manual. He knew that that word represents the seal on the original charter of woman's supremacy. The word brain has always been abhorrent to her. It represents the seal on the manifesto of the revolutionist.

Editha suddenly remembered herself.

"You talk about a spark of love," she said. "That is quite right. If the spark exists you can fan it into a flame. If the bud exists"—she was giving more room to a gigantic bloom in a pot in front of her—"the bland air will blandish it into a flower."

He laughed in appreciation of her philology—it was her philosophy a moment before.

"You would not suggest hot air pipes and a roof of glass?" said he.

"Nothing artificial—that is what we must avoid," she replied. "No; if the original spark has become extinguished, there is still an alternative."

"An alternative? I don't want an alternative."

"Oh, yes, you do. What did prehistoric man do when his blessed fire went out?"

"He froze."

"Not he. He set about obtaining a fresh spark by rubbing his bits of dry wood together. Arthur, even if no spark of her old love for you remains in her heart to be fanned into a flame, it is surely not beyond your power to recreate it. If Olive loved you once you can make her love you again. You said so yourself. You remember?"

"I remember. That thought has always been my consolation. But I still believe that the original spark was in her heart, not in her brain. It may have suffered an eclipse, but it had not been extinguished."

They left the conservatory by the door leading into the hall, and there Olive and Sir Everard were romping with the boys. It was the latter who was the boatman of the ottoman; Olive played the part of the anchor in this scheme of naval operations which had been improvised in the hall—an inland adaptation of something which they had witnessed on the Dorset coast. Arthur thought that Olive had a wistful look in her eyes when she said goodbye to him. He wondered if she would really have liked to be with him in the place of Editha in the conservatory.

The next morning Olive told Lady Calthorpe that she had had another dream of wandering through the same house that she had visited a few nights before.

"I spent most of my time in the hall last night," she said. "How was it that I only glanced at the hall when I was there before? There was a curious old ship at one end, like one of Nelson's men-of-war; no, older—one of the Armada ships, and above it were hanging the tatters of two flags. On a bracket in that corner was the marble bust of a man. The face had a certain resemblance to Mr. Garnett's—I mean Arthur's; I suppose I should refer to him as Arthur, should I not?"

"If it comes naturally to you to do so, you should certainly refer to him as Arthur," said Editha.

"I wonder if he expects me to call him Arthur when we meet," said Olive, looking at the tips of her fingers.

"I don't think that he would be hurt, were you to do so," she said, smiling. "And did you dream of meeting

any one in that hall with the ship in it?—a curious thing to find in such a place."

"I saw no one. It was in half darkness," said the girl. "I sat under a great palm and looked into the glowing ashes of a fire. That is all I remember."

Lady Calthorpe knew that she had been describing the great hall at King's Croft. The ship was a model of the old *Beltageuse*, which had fought against the Dutch in the seventeenth century—the flagship of Admiral Plowden Garnett, an ancestor of Arthur. It was his bust that was on the bracket, and the likeness between his features and those of Arthur was quite remarkable. Editha thought it better not to tell her that she had been describing Arthur Garnett's house, though she could never have been within its walls.

She did not even mention the matter to her husband. She had an idea that Sir Everard was beginning to think that she was nervous, especially in regard to Olive, and so she resolved to say nothing that would lead him to believe that her mind was dwelling upon what might bear to be termed the mysterious element that touched the girl's life at a point here and there. She found it impossible to explain how Olive was able to describe some curious details of a house into which she had never penetrated; nor had Sir Everard made any attempt to explain this mystery. As men and dogs have a notable dislike for anything that they cannot explain, the good wife considered herself justified in refraining from worrying her husband with some further data in a problem which she herself shrank from trying to solve.

So far as she was concerned, she could only feel that the phenomenal was fast becoming the usual in

her household, and she did not puzzle herself over an attempt to get behind the girl and her dreams. Even a cat, when brought face-to-face with the mystery of a mirror, will not, after the first time, endeavour to get at the cat at the back of the glass, but regards the phenomenon of the face looking into its own with philosophical indifference.

But certainly neither Lady Calthorpe nor her husband was prepared for the strange behaviour of Olive when Sir Everard talked of going to inspect the working of a new electric dynamo which he was thinking of ordering in place of the old one, which was doing its work rather indifferently on the estate. He was looking over the diagrams, which he had laid out in curly confusion on the billiard-table. The odour of the tracing-paper had been too much for the study.

"I think," said he, "that I shall go to the place this afternoon and see the thing working; I can't make much out of these scale-drawings, though I admit that the side views of the screws marked A and of the nuts marked BB are in the highest style of the art of the drawing-office. I can catch the 3.15. I'll order the dog-cart for 2.30."

"Then we need not have lunch any earlier," said his wife.

He agreed, and went to his study to send a telegram to the works to tell the engineers with whom he was in correspondence, of his intention.

Half an hour later Editha came to him. He was writing some letters.

"What's the matter? You look pale—startled," he said, glancing up.

"I have been a little startled," she said. "The fact is—

it seems absurd, but we have had some strange experiences —Olive has just come to me, greatly excited; she has entreated me to ask you not to go there to-day—to the dynamo works."

"Oh, indeed! Is there something important for me to do here?" he asked, as indifferently as possible.

"Nothing that I know of. She gives no explanation," said Editha. "She only says, 'He must not go—he must not go.' She is very earnest. It is clear that she has a premonition of something—something disastrous."

"And I am to alter my plans because a girl sees a guttering candle? Oh, my dear Editha!" he cried. "Perhaps it was the death-watch that she heard, or did she see a single magpie?"

"It does seem absurd—it would seem absurd if any one else had warned you; but Olive——"

"It seems a pity that any one so blessed with the power of divination should not apply it to herself. There was one disaster that she certainly did not foresee. If this sort of thing is to go on we shall not be able to take a walk in the garden unless we previously examine the entrails of a chicken, after the most approved system of the augurs."

"Poor Olive! I wonder when her father is coming home?"

Sir Everard rose from his chair. His hereditary sense of the duties of hospitality was shocked at his wife's suggestive words, more especially as those words accurately interpreted what was in his own mind.

"My dear Editha," he said, "that is a terrible thing for you to say, is it not?"

"Perhaps it is, only . . . . Oh, you know that I am

fonder of the girl than of any one of our friends; still, there are limits . . . . I shall be altogether miserable if you go to that place to-day."

"Then you will be very foolish, that's all," said he.

"I dare not deny it. If I were in your place I would go—I know that," said his wife. "I should not have the strength of mind to act up to my conviction. But you are strong enough."

He looked at her eyes; they were troubled with tears. She put out a hand to him. He took it after a moment's hesitation.

"I wish I could so easily prevent you at all times from feeling miserable," he said, with all tenderness.

"You will stay at home?" she cried, putting herself into his arms.

"You have made it worth my while," he said, when her lips had touched his. "Why didn't you ask me to do some great thing? This washing in Jordan means nothing to me."

"It means a great deal to me," she said.

"Then it means a great deal to me," said he. "I wonder if I dare take a stroll among the turnips instead of going to the engineer's. The Sibyl did not say anything about turnips, I hope?"

"You think me nothing but a woman," she murmured; but now the trouble had fled from her eyes.

"Nothing but a woman, thank God!" said he. "Nothing but a woman, indeed. I should not like to think that there was anything of the Sibyl about you. Poor Olive! Even an amateur Sibyl is trying at times."

They left the study together. Olive was waiting in the hall. She was excited. She looked eagerly first at Sir

Everard—he was laughing; then at Editha—she was grave.

"Do you mind telephoning out to the stables to have the four-wheeler and the ponies round at 2.30?" he said to the girl. "I am afraid that I did not make it plain to Dobson that I was going to have an hour among the turnips. I fancy he took me up wrongly this morning, and assumed that I meant to go somewhere by train."

Olive ran to the stable telephone and rang up the groom in waiting.

Not a word was said at lunch about his change of plans. Sir Everard had plenty of other topics to be cheerful on. He could be cheerful even in the presence of a parliamentary committee. But Lady Calthorpe was rather too courteous for every one to feel quite at ease in her presence that day. She was particularly courteous toward Olive, so that the girl became more silent than usual. But when Sir Everard had driven off with his dogs in the four-wheeled dogcart, she turned to Editha, saying:

"I am so glad! I cannot tell you how greatly relieved I feel."

"He is the best husband in the world," said Editha, quietly and courteously. "He is quite ready to respond to my silliest whim."

Olive hung her head.

The man in gaiters returned in time for a late cup of tea. He was in good spirits, having got the better of four brace of belated partridges and a couple of hares.

The next morning he was glancing at the newly arrived paper—the local one—while the servants were bringing in the family breakfast. Suddenly he cried out:

"Hallo! what's this?"

"What's what?" asked Editha, at the coffee-pot.

He put his head into the paper, reading silently. Then he smiled, and then became grave.

"H'm! Of course, it is not likely that I should have been in that particular place," he said. "Still—oh, I beg your pardon. A singular accident happened yesterday afternoon at Farewether's electric works, where I intended going—to-day or to-morrow; a leather band broke, and catching in one of the cogs of a wheel, whirled round and smashed the governor of the valve that controls the supply of steam to the engine; then, owing to the tremendous inrush of the steam, the engine went ahead so rapidly that the fly-wheel—an enormous thing—broke into fragments, smashing everything in the place, and nearly killing two men."

Lady Calthorpe was as white as the milk which she was in the act of pouring out. She turned her eyes toward Olive. Olive's face was slightly flushed.

"Of course, as I say, it is unlikely that I should have been in the engine-room just at that time, but—oh, I forgot; it was to-day I was due at the works. What a remarkable accident. I think I should like to send a cheque in aid of the poor fellows."

When the servants had left the room Editha rose from her place, and putting her arms about Olive, kissed her on each cheek.

CHAPTER XVII

THERE could be no doubt about it: Olive was looking forward to the coming of Arthur once more. Lady Calthorpe perceived that this was so, and was proportionately delighted. She felt that she had every reason to congratulate herself upon the success of the simple device of which she had made Arthur aware, and in the carrying out of which he was forced to become a confederate. By denying them that hour together which one of the two at least had been hoping for, she had done much to turn Olive's attention to his next visit. It was a great satisfaction to her to see the girl's face brighten when Sir Everard said at breakfast:

"I have a line from Garnett to say he will probably look in this afternoon."

"I am afraid that I shall not be able to give him tea; I have promised to attend a committee meeting of that awful sale of work," said Editha, with great promptitude.

"I daresay I shall be back at five," said her husband.

"Why, where are you going?" asked Editha.

"I am due at Wharton's at three—that confounded lease of Leggatt's," he replied. "But I shall be back at five—possibly before five."

"You will not mind entertaining Arthur for half an hour until we return?" said Editha, turning quite gravely to Olive.

Sir Everard laughed, saying:

"Olive will allow herself to be entertained by him, I am sure. The most certain way of being entertaining to a man is to let him entertain you."

"Be sure you tell him that we shall not be long away," said Editha.

"If that does not make him entertaining you may give him up as hopeless," said Sir Everard.

The phrases which he looped on to his wife's suggestions made unnecessary any reply from Olive. But Lady Calthorpe had no difficulty in seeing that she was not displeased at the prospect of being compelled to apologise to Arthur for the absence of his host and hostess. She contrasted the signs of interest which Olive displayed this morning at the mention of Arthur Garnett's name, with the indifference which she had shown on the occasion of his first visit to her at Calthorpe Place, and she felt that she had every reason to be satisfied with the result of her tactics—tactics was too strong a word, she felt, and she changed it in her thoughts for the more subdued word *plans*. Her plans were at least maturing. She had succeeded in interesting the girl in the man, and to have done so much was to have accomplished a great deal.

And Arthur, when he arrived, did not fail to notice the signs which Editha had observed in her bearing, such signs as made him feel that she was glad that he had come to her. The apologies with which she had been entrusted on behalf of Lady Calthorpe and her husband, took a very short time to deliver, and she did not quite succeed in giving them an aspect of reality, though she made a very honourable attempt in this direction.

"We must only try to be patient for an hour," he said.

"Do you remember that we had not five minutes together when I was here last?"

"Were you sorry?" she asked of him, with all the innocence of a little girl who, being innocent, is frank in her questions.

"I was very sorry," he replied. He did not ask her if she had been sorry also—he was not so rude. "I was sorry because there was in my mind a—let me see—a system of treatment, as it were, that I meant to apply to you. I thought of the other system, the one by which you come to be alive to-day—artificial respiration, it is called—and I could not help wondering how would such a form of treatment affect your memory."

She looked puzzled.

"Explain a little more of it, please," she said.

"My scheme of artificial respiration for the memory induces the memory to work on its own account by describing something that it should recall," said he. "People try it every day with success. A man meets another and is not remembered by him. 'I don't recollect ever having met you,' he says. 'What,' cries the first; 'don't you remember the Sunday we lunched together at Jones's, where we got into a discussion on the depreciation of silver, and you told us how they make the cheroots in Burmah?' 'Oh, of course, how stupid of me not to recognise you at once! It was your moustache. I could swear that you were clean shaven when we met at old Jones's. Have you seen anything of him since the smash came?' Now that is what I call artificial respiration for the memory."

"I see. And you think it is possible that if you rehearse to me some incidents that I have forgotten—the

discussion on silver and so forth—I may eventually be able to remember all about them?"

"That is my hope. But you see, even if you do not succeed in recollecting them, you will still have acquired a knowledge of those incidents, and your memory will be able to exercise itself upon them in the future."

"That should be almost as good as remembering the original incidents."

He would not go quite so far as that. He was a lover, but he would not go so far as to suggest that canned fruit was almost as good as fresh fruit. He was suggesting to her a banquet of canned fruits, quite palatable, and certainly better than nothing; but he would not go farther than that.

"*Glimpses into the Past*—that is the title of a book of reminiscences which I once read," said he. "I think that you will find the glimpses into your lost past pleasant to dwell upon."

"It will be something like glancing through the pages of a biography," said she. "Strange, isn't it, to think that I might read a history of my own life, and not know that anything of it referred to me?"

"Strange? My dear child, do you fancy that many of the men whose lives have been written would recognise themselves from the portraits drawn by their biographers?" he asked. "A biography is usually an attempt to draw a portrait in black and white, using only whitewash as a medium; and an autobiography is the least credible form of fiction."

"I should like to become acquainted with Olive Austin as she appeared to you," said she. "I think she may trust you to be a faithful biographer. I am sure that you

"'A ghost? What ghost? . . .' said Lady Calthorpe."

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could make her interesting, even to me; and I feel myself to be far away from her."

"You said something like that to me one day when we were looking around that splendid range of white mountains that form the sides of the basin of Fée," said he. "You said that you felt like some one looking down from the mountains upon us—that you did not seem to be one of the group of climbers resting in the moonlight. Do you see the scene? A circle of snowy ridges, here and there a peak, and far up some of the broad slopes the sprawling shadow of a cliff? There was a curious causeway that seemed to span the valley between two of the mountains. You saw it on the day of our arrival at Fée, and the legend about it made a deep impression on you. The legend is that it was built to enable the people on earth to mix with their friends from the blue above the snow. You never tired of watching that causeway, and one day you told me that you had seen figures on it."

He turned to her where she sat on one of the oak chairs of the hall. Her face had become pale, her lips were apart. The moment that he ceased speaking she sprang from her seat, crying:

"That is the White Causeway of my dream—the causeway on which I was walking with those figures who promised me happiness before your voice called me back, and I came back. But I have been there since. Sometimes, not merely when I fall asleep in my bed, but when I am sitting alone—sometimes when I have been playing something of Beethoven, I find myself on the White Causeway again."

He took her hand.

"That is the causeway which joins your past life with

your present," he said. "The one recollection which survived the wreck of your memory; and I feel certain that it will be upon this causeway you will come back to me, and be to me all that you once were. I told you one day when we were looking at it across the valley, that the White Causeway meant love—that that was the interpretation of the legend when it says that those who walk from the earth upon that path find themselves on the way to heaven. My sweet Olive, I know that, when our feet stand together upon the White Causeway, you will find that there has been no break in your life. I know that we are not yet side by side on the causeway. All that I ask of you is that you will tell me when you feel yourself by my side on that path which we are to tread together."

She did not speak a word for a long time. She actually walked away from him, and stood in the hollow of the mullioned window. A glint of sunset sunshine illuminated the leaded panel with the shield and the quarterings of the Calthorpes painted on it in azure and or. From where he stood he saw her head surrounded by an aureole of many tinges. She looked quite spiritual in that light. He did not want her to turn to him. He wished for nothing except to look at her.

It was not until the brief beam of light from the west had become lost among the sheltering cedars of the lawn that she turned to him.

"You called to me to come back to you," she said. "Was that because you wished to be by my side?"

"I wished you to be by my side. '*If I lose her I am lost!*'—those were the words which I said on that day when I came to know my heart, to be sure that I loved

you; and that was the thought which was in my heart when I saw you lying white and stiff before me. Olive, I could not have lived without you."

She took a step toward him, then stopped suddenly. There was silence in the hall. The sound of the rooks flying from the far-off fields to the woods came fitfully through the open door.

She went slowly to a great carved oak chair, and seated herself on the crimson Spanish leather cushion, laying a white hand on each of the lions' heads of the oaken arms. She looked across the hall at him curiously.

"I will tell you when it comes to me, Arthur," she said gently.

"That is all I ask," he said. "It will come. Do you not feel that it will come, Olive?"

"I think more than that; you have given me some hope that it will come. No, that is not just what I feel. What I feel is that it was with me once—part of my life, and you have made me hope by telling me that it may unite us both—not you and me, but the two lives that make up me. I have told you that I have felt that the other one was close to me sometimes, and sometimes quite apart from me, like a spirit existing apart from the body? Is love common to both? Does love for you exist in the one and not in the other?"

"Love is as great a mystery as that mysterious impression which you say you have. I think that you will come to find that is the causeway to unite——"

"To unite myself and—and the other—the other of whose presence I am sometimes conscious?"

"That mysterious other presence may be the shadowy memory of the love which you once had for me. When

you come to love me again that memory will merge in yourself."

She sighed in the silence that followed his speaking.

A few moments afterwards a footman brought in what used to be termed the tea equipage; but before Olive had begun to "do the honours," as pouring out tea was called at the same period, Lady Calthorpe arrived. She had contrived to escape from the thraldom of her committee meeting by the aid of some very ready but quite unscrupulous statements; and before she had confessed to Arthur, her husband entered with Christy Carew. The latter was driving a very neat tandem, and had been at King's Croft paying a visit to Doris Garnett, Arthur's sister. During the year, Christy's visits to King's Croft during the absence of the owner and the presence of his sister had been of increasing frequency.

"I thought I should find you here," said Christy, resuming his greeting of Arthur after he had fortified himself by hot cakes. "I promised Doris to remind you to be home before nightfall. They are a bit nervous about the ghost until they get used to it, but they have every confidence in you as a scare-spook."

"A ghost? What ghost? I heard of no ghost at King's Croft," said Lady Calthorpe.

Arthur laughed.

"Oh, some servants' nonsense," he said indifferently.

"Nothing of the sort," said Christy. "His is the usual modesty of the man who disclaims the imputation of being a millionaire. They have just acquired a ghost—one of the few in the market that can be picked up at a reasonable price. They are getting scarcer every day, owing to the great demand for them for the stately homes of the South

African diggers and the Chicago packers who are setting up as old English families. I hear you got a cheap lot. If it's not an impertinent question, how much did you pay for it, auction fees included? Did you get a man from the Psychical Society to do vet. before you bought it? If it doesn't pass the Psychical Society it's not worth the sheet that it's wrapped in, or the weight as scrap-metal of the chains that it clanks."

"New cooks new spooks. Have you acquired a new cook, or what?" inquired Sir Everard. "We had a ghost here for three months. It came with a cook. She had it in a bird-cage, with a big bandana handkerchief wrapping it up. We thought it was only a canary. We had sodden mutton and ghost for one quarter—they usually go hand-in-hand—and then we sacked the cook. She carried off the ghost in the bird-cage, and we have not seen it since."

"You bet the spectre of King's Croft doesn't come out of the kitchen cauldron," said Christy. "'Tis an airy-fairy female ghost."

"With a moan or a shriek?" asked Sir Everard, lighting a cigarette.

"Neither; one of the silent moving, four cylinder, water-cooled, with movable hood and electric ignition," said Christy. "Tell us all about it, Arthur, old chap; you're the owner—you should be allowed a look in."

"Oh, some female fantasy," said Arthur. "I believe it was Jimmy, the pony boy, who saw it first. Of course, when it is once known that a thing like that is in the air, every one sees it. One of the housemaids caught a glimpse of it sitting in the hall a few nights ago, and made the kitchen pallid with her story—all but the cook.

She is made of sterner stuff than to pale before a simple adult spectre. Well, I must be off now. Come over and see us, ghost and all, some day."

"Is Doris staying at home for any time?" inquired Editha.

"Ask Christy," said Arthur.

Christy blushed like an early Victorian girl. Everybody was looking at him.

"I heard by the merest accident that Miss Garnett was staying for the hunt ball," said he, stiffly. "She is counting the days till she can get away. Her brother is very hard to live with, she gave me to understand. They say he beats her. Mind, I don't vouch for the truth of this; but the rumour is quite plausible."

Thus, with the exchange of the figures of speech of familiar friends—the imagery of which was not obscured by any subtlety of sentiment—Arthur said his *au revoir* to Christy. Christy remained for a short time talking to Olive. They had so picked up the tangled threads of their old relationship that neither of them seemed to feel it had ever been interrupted.

CHAPTER XVIII

AS he rode home in the soft dusk of a mid-October day, Arthur felt that he had every reason to be gratified at the progress which he was making in that strange experience of his—his second courtship of the same girl. He had told Editha Calthorpe before leaving Lucerne that he had every confidence in his ability to re-awaken in Olive the love which she had once had for him, and now he felt that he had not been guilty of an empty boast: he was very well content with the progress which he was making. It was clear that she had not yet fully recovered from the effects of that terrible struggle which she had for her life. She still talked as if she were convinced that she was not quite the same Olive Austin that had responded to his love. She seemed impressed with the fancy that she represented two identities, and he had not stopped to try to prove to her that such a condition of existence was impossible. He thought it better to let her fancy pass as a piece of symbolism, as indeed it was—an exquisite symbol of her life, as the idea of the White Causeway, about which she was still dreaming, was a symbol of the love that he hoped would bridge over the awful chasm between her two lives, as one might say.

He had no doubt that, as she grew stronger—as she assimilated the conditions of her life on the nearer

of the chasm with those of her life on the farther, by letting her love for him possess her at all times—she would lose that mysterious impression of which she had told him with a frankness that showed him she did not regard it as anything of a mystery.

And then, having dwelt for some time upon the ideal, he felt that it would soon be necessary for him to prepare himself to face the real. The real in his thoughts was symbolised by Mr. Austin.

Mr. Austin would soon be returning to England from his sojourn at Homburg, and he would have to be faced sooner or later, so Arthur thought it well to ask himself what concessions he would be prepared to make to Mr. Austin's rascality in order to find favour in his eyes.

The previous year, when he had first met Olive and learned that she was the daughter of a man whose name was notorious throughout the county, he was filled with a deep pity for her; and when he thought of her marrying one of the men who were clearly fascinated by her beauty, he easily saw his way to extend his compassion so that it should include any possible son-in-law to Mr. Austin.

At that time, having reached the age of thirty-one, he could not think of himself as occupying the position of son-in-law to Mr. Austin. He was charmed with the girl—even the most level-headed man of thirty-one is likely to be charmed with a girl when he perceives that quite a considerable number of other men are charmed with her; but to ally himself with the house of Austin, to put himself in the position of being referred to as the son-in-law to Ambrose Austin—oh, no. He was not the man who would perform that *rôle* with any measure of self-satisfaction.

It was the thought of Austin *père* that frightened away many of the men who were charmed with Olive; of this fact Arthur became aware, and his sympathy for her became deeper. The men who had become shy were, however, quite right—he could not but acknowledge that; at the same time, he declared that the girl was too good for the best of them.

And then there came the day when the idea of allying himself with the family of Austin became less revolting to him; to put the case fairly, the prospect of having Mr. Austin for his father-in-law was more endurable than the prospect of living for the remainder of his life apart from Mr. Austin's daughter.

But he never thought of Mr. Austin without becoming aware of a distasteful aroma in the air, although his confidence in himself was sufficiently great to allow of his seeing how it would be quite possible for him to play the honourable *rôle* of Mr. Austin's son-in-law who was clever enough to be able to look after himself and steer clear of Mr. Austin. It was this self-confidence which compelled him to take a firm stand when face-to-face with Olive's father at Lucerne, when that little matter of the mortgage came forward for discussion. He was anxious to give that person a hint of the man he had to deal with, and to convince him that, even at the risk of losing the daughter, he would not allow himself to be played upon by the father.

Since his return to England Arthur had easily been able to keep the father out of his thoughts: he was too fully occupied thinking of Olive. If she were to continue indifferent to him, he would be spared the objectionable necessity of another interview with her father. But now,

with a heart full of gladness at the prospect of winning once more the girl's love, he rode homeward, and, as he neared King's Croft, he found that Mr. Austin was pushing himself forward in his thoughts of the future.

The fact that his sister Doris had also been considering what the position of Mr. Austin would be in regard to the house of Garnett he thought a curious coincidence. Miss Garnett was a young woman who, although nearly ten years younger than her brother, still thought very highly of him. She had admired his prudence in keeping free from matrimonial entanglements—she had been making use of this phrase since her fifteenth year—and it was a great relief to her to feel that the discretion of the Garnett family was safe in his keeping. She had large thoughts respecting the Garnett family, and for some time she was not certain that her brother quite realised the immense responsibilities which his position as the head entailed.

It was a staggering blow to the confidence which she had begun to place in him, to learn from him that it was his hope to marry Olive Austin. She wrote to him a four-page letter while he was still at Fée, pointing out with great firmness how impossible was such an aspiration, and giving him some frank advice, which had with him all the weight which is inseparable from the counsel that comes from a young woman of twenty-two, with four years' experience of the world (acquired at an excellent school at Eastbourne), to a man of thirty-two, who has always had abundance of money to spend.

In spite of all that Christy Carew had to say on the subject of Olive Austin's sweetness—Miss Garnett had the best of reasons for thinking highly of Christy Carew's judgment upon womankind—she declared that it would

be impossible for her ever to sanction such an alliance as her brother assured her was imminent.

And then came the news of Olive's accident.

Not a word did Doris Garnett say about the Finger of Providence; but she felt that it would be the merest affectation for her to try to conceal from herself the fact that heaven was looking very carefully after the best interests of the Garnett family. But once again her faith was shaken when Arthur returned from abroad and gave her assurance of his intention respecting the rewooing of the girl. Even then, however, Miss Garnett was fair enough to refrain from laying the blame on Providence. It was simply her brother who was flying in the face of this benevolent power.

She told Christy as much when he visited her with his tandem; and when Arthur returned just in time to dress for dinner, she was still warm from the effects of her own eloquence on this subject; but owing to the presence of the servants, she had no chance of talking to her brother, and of introducing whatever additional points had occurred to her since she had an opportunity of discussing the question with him previously. The grapes had, however, scarcely been placed upon the table before she made him aware of what he called a singular coincidence, by saying that she had been thinking all the afternoon about Mr. Austin's record: she fancied that she knew something of what the recorded incidents in the life of such a man amounted to; but she forgot that her Eastbourne school was not inclusive in the knowledge that it imparted—on the contrary, it prided itself on its exclusiveness; and the one subject which was strictly excluded from every class-room was the knowledge of good and evil.

"It is utter nonsense for any one to say that when a man marries a girl he does not marry her family," cried Miss Garnett, after some little preliminary "salutes" and "returns" with the foils buttoned with purple grapes. "A man allies himself to the family of the woman whom he marries; he becomes one of that family: he cannot help it."

Her brother shook his head mournfully.

"I am afraid that is but too true," said he.

"It is but too true," she affirmed. "And what does that mean?"

"That is just the point," said he.

"It means that whatever is done by a member of that family reflects upon the other members," said she.

"Whether for good or bad?" he suggested interrogatively.

"Whether for good or bad," she assented.

"That is extremely lucky in some cases," said he. "For instance, should the son of a rather shady family marry the daughter of an unimpeachable household, he, having married the virtuous household, becomes whitewashed forthwith."

"Nothing of the sort," said Doris, quickly. "In such a case the girl who marries the shady man chooses deliberately to ally herself with him, and is looked on by every one as a member of the undesirable family."

"Why shouldn't the son become merged in the respectability of the girl's family?" asked Arthur.

"Every one knows that the girl who makes a *mésalliance* sinks to the level of the man whom she marries."

"You mean to say that her marriage places the girl on the same level as her husband, irrespective of her family?"

"That is undoubtedly the case," cried Doris, who was not wary in the matter of pitfalls.

"Oh!" said her brother, who had done a little argumentative spadework at the Union in his Oxford days. "Oh! I am quite glad that you are so firm on that point of the girl getting to the level of the man whom she marries. I had a notion that you believed that it was the family of the man who married beneath him who was affected by his act."

"And that is perfectly true—that is just what I do believe," cried Doris, warmly.

"Let me understand you, my dear sister," said Arthur. "You assured me just now that whatever is done by a member of the family into which a man or a girl marries, reflects upon the other members of his or her family; and when I asked you if that rule held, whether for good or bad, you cordially assented. But now you would go back upon your assertion, and say that if the girl marries a man of shady family, she sinks to his level, the man being the dominant partner; but you also say that if it is the man who marries the girl belonging to the shady family, she drags the man—the dominant partner—down to her level. My dear child, you cannot blow both hot and cold when you are trying to convince some one older than yourself of your worldly wisdom."

Doris flushed. She had taken to logic and she found that it did not suit her; but when non-suited on logic she quickly gained her point by the aid of her infallible ally, instinct.

"If you had not been thinking all the way home just as I have been thinking, you would not be so anxious to prove yourself in the right," she cried. "You know

quite well that I have been talking good sense, and that you are finding Mr. Austin a bitter pill to swallow."

She rose from the table and hastened to the door, which a moment later he held open for her. Her instinct hinted to her the possibility of his having an answer ready for her and the advisability of flight before he could deliver it.

He held the door open for her, but before she had reached it, he held up his hand and closed the door. They stood facing each other, as a brother and sister should who do not want to fall out.

"Look here, Doris," he said quietly; "you have hit the nail on the head. I have been thinking of Austin for the past hour and a half. Hour and a half?—I tell you that I have been thinking of him for the past year and more. Do you fancy that I am looking forward to a family party with him at the head of the table? I certainly am not, but I think that by a little tact I can prove to Mr. Austin that when I marry his daughter—if I am ever lucky enough to marry her—I do not necessarily marry her family. He gave me a chance once of indicating to him pretty plainly what he had to expect from me, and I don't think that he will make any mistake on this point. You fancy that people—our neighbours—will talk; that we shall be injured socially by the transaction, should it ever come off. Don't let that thought disturb you. I have had too much experience of such things to let it disturb me. Have I not seen the heads of noble houses marry music-hall girls and bring them to the ancestral castle, to be visited by the best people, not merely in the county, but in the land? Have I not seen the triumphs of Chicago?—peers wedding

the daughters of pork-packers, the daughters of swindling corner-makers? But you needn't go beyond our own county to see what things can be done in the matrimonial line every day. You know the Andersons—well, of course, they were never more than on the fringe of the county. Some years ago James Anderson was in lodgings in Baymouth, and married the maid-of-all-work. Her father was an industrious man who drove a fly for him. Two years ago she was presented at Court by a duchess. A good dinner or two given to the right people wipes out all the inconvenient past nowadays. You shake your head. Take my word for it, Doris, it has been the same in England from time immemorial. I'm not afraid of being hurt by Mr. Austin. My only fear just now is that I shall not be fortunate enough to reawaken all his daughter's old feeling for me. I sometimes feel in despair when I think about all that has happened. I am beginning to think about it now. Come and play a game of billiards with me."

He was going to the door once again, but she put herself between it and himself. Her eyes were full of tears. She put out both her hands to him. In another moment her head was upon his shoulder.

"My dear, dear Arthur," she cried, in a voice humble with tears. "My dear brother, all I want is to see you happy—surely happy, not happy in any way that means pain and humiliation to follow. Chris wants me to marry him, but I told him that nothing would induce me to leave you until I saw you happy—really and truly happy."

"What a selfish brute I am—thinking only about myself and my own affairs, forgetting that I am brother to the sweetest sister in the world!" he said. "My darling,

you have given me another incentive to happiness. Chris is the best fellow in the world. He is very nearly worthy of you. I cannot say more in his favour. We will run up to town together one of these days and order a pendant to match your Deccan plume. Now let us have our billiards."

He went with his arm about her into the billiard-room, and their topic during the game was the possibility of finding diamonds and sapphires equal in lustre to those which Doris had inherited from her mother in the famous Deccan plume, a combination of jewels enshrined in the gazel of many an Oriental poet before it became the prize of that fine old general, Sir Heber Garnett. An hour before midnight the butler brought soda-water and liqueurs. Doris said good-night, and went to her room. The butler remained for a few minutes, giving Mr. Garnett a report of the misdoings of a certain bin from which better things had been expected. Then he also went off, Mr. Garnett saying that he would switch off the light in the hall when he should be retiring.

Arthur drank a glass of whiskey and soda, and, lighting another cigar, threw himself into one of the leather chairs in front of the fire, and gave himself up to his thoughts of the future and its possibilities. It was an hour that gave him a chance to think. Stillness wrapped the house as with a velvet garment—heavy, muffling. Outside there was a hint of fitful winds—the rustle of the crisp leaves on the carriage drive, very like the sound of a ripple hissing along a shallow shore of empty shells. From the old tower that stood far away from the house, the last remnant of the old castle of King's Croft, came the rare hoot of an owl.

For nearly an hour Arthur remained in his chair smoking and thinking. Then, as the clock chimed twelve, he jumped up, surprised to find that the hour was so late. He unscrewed the cork of his soda-water bottle and poured the remainder of the contents into his tumbler. He was in the act of drinking when the door sprang open. His sister staggered into the room and caught him by the arm. She was in her nightdress, her feet were bare, and her hair flowing over her shoulders just as it had been brushed out for the night. She was white and trembling. She clutched him by the arm, but could not speak for some minutes after he had exclaimed:

"Good heavens! What is the matter?"

She cast a fearful glance at the door, and then whispered:

"I have seen it—I have seen it—the figure—in my dressing-room—on the stairs—she is there."

CHAPTER XIX

SHE clung to him, trembling. He poured some brandy into a glass and made her drink it. He helped her to the chair which he had just left, and sent the logs into a blaze. He looked round for something to throw over her shoulders, but saw nothing that would answer his purpose.

"One moment—I will get you a rug from the cloak-room," he said.

Before he had gone a step toward the door she had started up.

"No, no; don't leave me—don't leave me," she cried. Her voice had something of a shriek in it.

He returned to her trying to calm her.

"Don't be alarmed," he said. "What is there to be alarmed about? Tell me what you fancy—what you saw."

"It was no fancy," she said. "I laughed at the servants' whispers. It had been seen three nights ago, you know—you laughed too; but to-night,—Masters had just left me—not a quarter of an hour—I was actually in bed, but I returned to the dressing-room for my book,—I saw her—the figure of a woman—not in white—that was queer,—not in white—blue; she seemed to vanish at the door. I was startled. I thought it might be Masters. The light was not on in the dressing-room—only moonlight. I called

to her, thinking she was Masters. I threw open the door; there I saw her—there, before me on the stairs. She slid away from before me—slid, I could not see where she went. I do not know how I managed to get down to you. Oh, Arthur, Arthur—what does this mean?—haunted? haunted? I did not scream. It would have brought the servants, and not one of them would remain in the house. And we laughed at their stories; they had seen it twice—perhaps three times."

He continued trying to soothe her. She was leaning forward to the blazing logs, holding shivering hands out to them.

He suddenly remembered that in one of the presses he had noticed an old velvet smoking-jacket. He left her for a second to get it, but she would hardly let him cross the room. Her eyes followed him as if she expected him to run away and leave her alone. He got the thing, shook it, and threw it over her shoulders.

"Quite extraordinary," he said. "The whole affair. You did well not to scream. How strong of you to be able to resist it."

"They would have left in a body—the servants," she said.

"Of course they would. They seem only too glad of an excuse these days," he assented. "I hope you will not catch cold, Doris."

"Oh no. It was a kind of faint blue—hazy tint—the tint of moonlight; no, more like the blue of an electric spark—but it was blue and not white. Of course, the servants said white."

He knew from her way of talking how disordered her brain had become.

"Strange—altogether strange! I wonder what it is," he said. "Come with me to your room and put something on—a fur cloak and slippers. We will go through the house together. It may turn out to have been a trick. Are there any new servants? Is your maid, Masters, beyond suspicion?"

"There are two new servants—of course Masters is all right. But don't think for a moment that there was any trick. Ah, if it was a trick they would have used white—white would have been the ghost of a servant's trick. But I am not afraid now that I am with you. I will go with you wherever you please."

"There is certainly nothing to be afraid of. I can understand how you were startled, but that is no reason why you should be afraid. Come along. Wrap that jacket well around you; it's better than nothing."

She held his arm and went with slow steps out of the room. At the door she paused, allowing him to go a yard or two ahead of her into the hall. She saw him glance round and then turn and wait for her. She ventured to leave the room. He put her into her room, and while she was getting on her cloak and slippers, he stood looking down the corridor. The idea of a skittish housemaid playing the old ghost-trick was still in his mind.

In a few minutes his sister, presenting a far less picturesque appearance, was beside him. She said something to him about a revolver as they passed the door of his room.

"What do I want a revolver for?" he asked. "A revolver? There is the weak point in your impression; it does not amount to conviction. What use would a

weapon be? If the thing is a trick, I don't want to shoot a girl merely because she happens to be foolish."

She was ready to make another affirmation as to the figure which she had seen; but she felt that that was not the moment to do so.

For the next quarter of an hour they went from corridor to corridor—he carried an electric stable-lamp—and as they went on, Doris became more brave. Fear has the same quality as courage; it sometimes oozes out by the finger-tips. In the case of a girl the act of the fingers resting on a man's arm assists the process; the man's arm is the earth contact that completes the electric circuit.

The only alarming incident of the exploration was the audibility of the butler's slumber. The doors heard it and shook. Another such sleeper in the house would have necessitated a consultation of architects.

"I think you may go to your bed in peace," said Arthur, when they had returned to the girl's door. "You are quite yourself again, are you not?"

"I feel all right now," she replied; "but I think I will ring up Masters. She can sleep in the dressing-room."

"You would do well to invent some excuse that will pass muster," he suggested. "I'll leave that to you."

He waited by her side while she spoke to her maid through the telephone that connected the rooms. Then he kissed her and said good-night. She did not ask him to stay by her until Masters should arrive. He knew that she wished to show him that she was brave—not like other girls, who are prostrated for a week by the sight of a phosphorescent fish on a plate in the larder.

He went back to the billiard-room and [illegible]

water, which he had set down when startled by that abrupt entrance of his sister. Then he returned to his chair by the fire, and began to think what was the origin of all this fuss about a spectre. Barely a week had passed since Doris had told him that the housekeeper was troubled by one of the domestics, who declared, with shivers, that she had seen something sitting in the hall the previous night. This particular domestic had no business to be in the hall, and the housekeeper, being aware of this, had, she said, told the girl that if she would keep out of places where she had no right to be, she would see no more somethings.

But the next night a domestic who had legitimate business in the Basket Drawing-room—so called from the silk panels on the walls, with baskets of flowers swinging on flowing ribbons—had come with a story of something going out of one door while she, the domestic, was entering by another.

The flutter in the servants' hall was the subject of a communication made by the housekeeper to Miss Garnett, who had laughed over the questionable shape with her brother, and had not refrained from making it a topic when Chris had visited her. Chris treated the matter with his habitual flippancy, and Arthur had thought no more of it.

But now he was thinking of it, though rather from the standpoint of the householder who looks out for burglars in disguise, than that of the seeker after psychical truth. He made up his mind that he would have a chat with those new servants in the morning. He would have no tricks played under his roof if it was in his power to prevent it.

He sat for some time watching the gradual expiring of the logs in the grate. The largest had almost smouldered

away; it was a mass of white ash surrounding crimson loop-holes; but the smaller log was resinous, alternately flaring and seething like metal in a furnace. Every flare sent mis-shapen shadows flying across the walls and over the ceiling, for he had switched off the lights overhanging the billiard-table, sitting with a reading-lamp only and that overhung by a green silk shade.

Gradually he became conscious of an impression of not being alone in the room. It seemed as if those wild flying shadows were animate. But it was not from them that he derived his strange impression, and he knew it. It was from something more indefinite—more subtle. Some one had entered the room—he could not tell when, for he had received no shock, he had not been startled. The feeling had come upon him very gradually, but strong though his conviction was, he would not turn round his head. To do so would be to insult his own intelligence, which he hoped would prove more powerful than that other vague consciousness. His intelligence assured him that it was impossible for any one to be in the room with him.

He did not move his position by an inch. He kept his eyes fixed upon the spiral flame, that spirted jerkily now from one part of the log, now from another—sometimes with a hiss and a splutter, again in silence. He had an impression of being hypnotised by that quivering, flitting flame—of some presence standing behind him holding soothing hands above his head—soothing, fluttering hands waving and weaving a network of passes about him. But he would not yield to their influence; his intelligence would prove stronger than any airy bondage. He made an attempt to shake off the subtle influence of what he knew could only be a fancy; but for some reason he was as

powerless as a man in a nightmare. He could feel the soothing bondage tighten upon him, and now he had no sense of oppression—he was floating on the shadows. He had a sense of infinite pleasure, a sense of being beside Olive Austin. The nightmare feeling had passed. He was free.

With a sigh of relief he turned his head. Olive Austin was beside him.

Though he had been aware of that sense of her presence, it seemed as if this did not go to diminish his astonishment. He was too much surprised to be able to realise all in a moment that she was there. Some seconds elapsed before he sprang to his feet, saying in a whisper:

"Is it possible? Olive—Olive—how in the name of heaven?—I never was so astonished in my life. How is it possible? How could you be here without every one knowing it? How can you have come from the Calthorpes?"

"I really do not know," she replied. "I came here because I love you, and because I felt so lonely—so lonely away from you, my love. Do you remember that evening at Fée when you and Chris were expected back from the mountain and you did not come—we all thought that you must have met with an accident; and then that foolish man who talked about Beachy Head gave us another shock: Arthur, the loneliness that I felt that day—only the night before, it was, that you told me you loved me—the loneliness was no greater than I have had in your absence. Do not blame me for coming to you."

"Blame you—*I* blame *you*?" he said, and laughed. "Oh, my dearest! But—let me think—I told you of the White Causeway; I do not think I mentioned it climb

of the Mittaghorn: is it possible that it has come back to you—your memory—your love?"

"*I* have come back to *you*. How could you fancy that my heart had forgotten you?" she said. She had now come close to him where he was standing, and had put her hands on his shoulders, looking into his face with infinite tenderness and devotion. "I who am here with you, face to face—with you, Arthur—I am the one who has never ceased to think of you with all love. Look at me, my love; I am the heart of Olive Austin."

He had his arm about her. He felt the delight of her face close to his, the gracious warmth of her body, the coolness of her hands. The intoxication of her presence overwhelmed every doubt, and even his desire to ask all the questions which at the first sight of her he had begun to put to her. He could only think, "She is here, she is here; and if she is beside me, what does anything else matter?" He held her close to him, whispering in her ear, scarcely taking his lips off her cheek.

"My beloved—my beloved! I knew that nothing could come between us. I was not afraid of losing you. I knew that the past would return to you—the past and the love that glorified those days in the mountains we spent together."

"It did not need to come back; it was always there, dearest, always here."

She held his hand against her heart. He felt its warm beating, and every throb sent a thrill through him. He could only hold her to him, whispering:

"Beloved, best beloved!"

She sighed, and then laughed like a child. He joined

her, he knew not why. But she had laughed, that was reason enough for a lover. Then they separated to the extent of a foot or two. He held her away from him, and looked into her face in delight. When he had satisfied his eyes he caught her close to him again, and, holding her head back, kissed her passionately on her mouth, her cheeks, her forehead.

When he released her, a long strand of her hair was flowing over her shoulder and noosing her neck. She put up her hand to her head.

"You have been very rough," she said, with a flush flitting over her face. "Oh, how rough! My beautiful hairpin—the one you gave me at Lucerne—the garnets surrounding the pearl—you have dislodged it. We must find it."

She was on her knees on the carpet.

"I am so sorry," said he. "It is bound to be on the carpet. Wait a second and I will bring the lamp."

The lamp was a movable one, having a flexible silk wire connection in a panel. It stood on a small writing-table only a few yards away. But in moving it off the table he had forgotten that the spare wire was rolled around the plinth of the ormolu column of the stand, so that the electric "plug" slipped out of its place and the room was in darkness.

"Idiotic!" he cried, feeling along the wire for the now pendulous plug. He unwound a yard or two and then re-made the connection.

When he turned with the lighted lamp in his hand he found himself looking across the billiard-table at his sister. He started, glancing at the Turkey rug at his feet where Olive had been kneeling when he had gone

to the lamp. She was not there. His eyes went round the room. She was not to be seen. Then he looked at his sister.

"Why on earth—didn't I leave you in your room a short time ago?" he cried.

"I did not go to bed. I did not hear you come upstairs, and I became afraid," she said.

"Afraid?—afraid of what?" he asked.

"I did not know what to think," she said sadly. "I had a fear that something might have happened to you, so I stole downstairs. I heard your voice, and—it really seemed as if there was another voice."

The girl could scarcely speak owing to her excitement; she almost gasped out her last words, and while she was speaking her eyes were searching the room. His eyes were doing the same. When their eyes met, she perceived that he was as greatly surprised as she at the result of their scrutiny of the dim corners of the large, half-lighted room.

"You should have remained in your room, Doris," he said. "What was there to be afraid of? You heard my voice, did you? Well, the fact is—you see that easy chair; your fears for me were but too well founded. The fire had more life in it than I fancied. I sat down in front of it, and—well, it looks very like as if I fell asleep, doesn't it?"

"And you talked in your sleep?" she said doubtfully.

"If you heard my voice. How am I to explain it otherwise?" said he. "I assure you that I was not rehearsing a speech."

"How could I have fancied that I heard a second voice?" she said, after a pause.

He shook his head.

"Could it have been that I was mechanically repeating some dialogue that I heard on the stage: the brain plays strange tricks with us sometimes, and for one to talk in one's sleep means, I believe, simply that some scrap of the brain works its way to the surface, and so forth—something like that? Anyhow, I am quite ready for my bed now. We are having rather an exciting night of it with one thing and another, Doris."

He was playing with the switch of the electric lamp, as if wishing for her to make a move. She understood his hint. She glanced quickly round the room when his head was averted.

"I am going," she said.

He switched off the light.

The moment that Doris reached the hall, which was lighted by a great old ormolu chandelier adapted for electricity, she glanced round the oak panels of the walls, just as she had glanced round the billiard-room; and she did not fail to notice that he did exactly the same the moment that he came into the light. They went upstairs without a word, but when they reached the first landing, where the staircase branched off to right and left, they both stood still, for there sounded through the night the prolonged howl of the stable-yard dog. A second and a third howl came, the last dying away in a shivering falsetto whine.

The girl looked at her brother; her lips were parted, he could hear her quick breathing.

"What is that?" she whispered. "Oh, Arthur, what is the matter to-night?"

"What should be the matter?" he said. "Have you

never heard Gilly howl before to-night? The moon is too much for his nerves. Do you know that once he killed a cat? It is no wonder that he is taken that way at times. A guilty conscience quivered through every howl."

She did not smile. She shivered.

Once again he said goodnight to her at the door of her room, and passed on, yawning, to his own.

The moment that he was within his room he threw himself into a chair, and his hands dropped limp on each of its arms.

What was it that happened? That was what he found impossible to tell. He tried to recall all the incidents of the night: the first appearance of Doris at the entrance to the billiard-room, with her breathless story of having seen something—something unusual; their search through the corridors; and then his return to the armchair and the fire.

What had happened then?

That was what he wished to know. Had he fallen asleep? He remembered being conscious of some force holding him fast in the chair until . . . . Had he fallen asleep? Was it a dream of Olive that left him with this impression of having seen her—spoken to her—held her in his arms?

He felt himself utterly at fault: he was unable to say whether or not he had been asleep. The more he tried to puzzle out the matter the more he tended to explain it on the assumption that he had slept; for if he had been awake, would he not have asked her at once how she had come to the place—how she meant to return to the Calthorpes?

But was he not bound to link the incident of her appearing to him with the other incident of the night—that which brought his sister down to him for the first time? Doris

had seen her—had at least caught a glimpse of her. She had said something about blue—a garment with some faint tint of blue in it. He remembered that he too had seen the blue tint, though of course, being a man, he was unable to say whether it appeared in her robe or her bodice. But it was about her, and there was the link.

And she had proved to him that she had recovered her memory, and, with her memory, her love. This gave him the greatest joy.

But what business had he sitting there, recalling all that meant happiness to him, while the question of her very being remained unsolved? If she had really come to him, where was she now? She could not have left the house. It was impossible to think of her leaving the house. She must be awaiting his return to the billiard-room.

He was in the act of leaving his room when another question came to him—he was under a plane-tree in September, and every leaf that fluttered about him was a question. His latest was:

"If I find her, what then?"

Should he call his sister and give Olive into her care? Or should he drive her back to Calthorpe Place, whence she had come?

He had no answer ready to these questions; but he felt that a solution would come in her presence, so he stole down the stairs with all stealth. When he reached the hall he stood for a few minutes in the moonlight, which flowed through the great painted window of the landing, taking the rich crimson and azure and orange of the leaded panes and casting them on the dark floor, making a moonlight mosaic in patches among the rugs.

He waited. He thought that she might be somewhere in the hall, and, seeing him, would come to his side. He waited in vain. He could hear the faint monotone of his sister's wakeful conversation with her maid in her room upstairs—it sounded in the hall like the murmuring of prayers in a church heard by some one at the farthest end of the churchyard; but there was no sound of anything stirring at his end of the staircase.

He went on tiptoe athwart the variegated ribbons of moonlight to the entrance to the billiard-room, and the moment he passed the door he stood still, whispering:

"Olive—Olive—dear love, I am here."

There was silence.

He went across the room to the lamp and switched on the light. Holding it aloft, he looked round the room. He set down the lamp and seated himself slowly in the chair which he had occupied before. Was it possible, he asked himself, that he had only dreamed of seeing her—talking to her—kissing her face?

It must have been a dream—curiously vivid—enthralling as some dreams are that one has when sleeping in an unaccustomed position. That impression of not being alone in the room must have been the last of which he was conscious before crossing the mysterious causeway—the White Causeway leading to the realm of unconsciousness.

He rose and put out his hand to the lamp, and the movement, slight though it was, was enough to show him a shining object close to the table. He picked it up, and he felt the blood rush to his face suddenly and then recede from it as quickly, for in his hand he held the jewelled hairpin—a pearl surrounded by flat garnets—which he had bought for Olive at Lucerne.

CHAPTER XX

THE question was answered. It was Olive herself who had been with him, and he had not been asleep after all. And if she had been in the house at that time assuredly she could not have left it since. He felt irritated with Doris. Why should she come down for the second time, with her stories of fears and doubts? It was certainly her coming that had sent Olive away: Olive had clearly no wish to come face to face with Doris at midnight in that place, and he rather thought that she was quite right in showing reluctance on such a matter.

But where on earth could she be? She could not possibly be acquainted with the ramifications of the place. If she wished to remain concealed there was nothing to tell her how she could best carry out her desire. But why should she want to hide from him? For that matter, why should she come to King's Croft at all?

He felt utterly bewildered by the mysteries which the incidents of the night offered him for solution. He found it quite impossible to reconcile one thing with another. Why, taking the occurrences in consecutive order, was it not impossible to say by what means the girl had reached King's Croft—whether she had driven or ridden or walked?

One thing only was certain—namely, that she could not have left the house. He was bound to find her, and the

sooner he set about doing so the sooner the mysteries which were cobwebbing his brain would be cleared away.

And then, as he stood at the door of the billiard-room, the need for caution occurred to him. He would have to take King Mark as his example. It would never do for him to draw down his sister for the third time from her room that night. So, cat-like, he stole through the hall, and into the drawing-rooms which, as Olive had described when telling her dream to Lady Calthorpe, were reached from a gallery and steps off the hall. There was the Louis XVI. Basket Drawing-room, with its silk panels and painted ceiling after the style of one of the rooms in the Little Trianon; and next to it, the mahogany-panelled room with the beautiful ceiling and frieze designed by the brothers Adam, and inlaid with Flaxman medallions executed by Wedgwood. Although both these rooms were locked on the outside, so demoralised had his power of reasoning become, that he turned the keys and went through both these spacious apartments; and then crossed to the library, with its solemn bookcases of Italian carved walnut, and thence to the octagonal breakfast-room, with its flowered damask, and the great oak dining-room, with its portraits set in the panels, and the handsome boy with the greyhound by Lely in the mantelpiece.

He seated himself on one of the red leather chairs in this room and stared helplessly at the pictures of his ancestors. He felt like one of them—as helpless—as incapable of doing anything to solve the mystery which was oppressing him. He tried to think what he could do. He tried to pull himself together—to see his way to the next step which he should take. The longer he thought, the more like to a painted picture did he feel himself. He took the

garnet hairpin out of his pocket and looked at it blankly. He wished that he had not found it. It was this thing that prevented his falling back upon the delightful dream-theory which would have saved him an infinity of perplexing speculations.

He stood in the centre of the hall once again, facing the Fragonard pictures of the *Fête Champêtre*, and asking himself if he should ring up the stables and order a horse to be saddled. If she were returning to Calthorpe Place he could not fail to overtake her. But how could she possibly have left the house? . . . . More bewilderment!

His conjectures led him no whither. The moment that he fancied he saw an opening for action, a reflection flung a sand-bag in the gap, in the manner of the text-books of defence, and he found a sortie impossible.

He went slowly up to his bedroom, and laid himself down on a bed of tossed and tumbled conjectures and counterconjectures until the morning.

Doris was grave. He thought that she was actually suspicious. What was she suspicious of? Did she fancy that he was to blame for—for what? He had often thought it strange that quite young girls, with apparently no experience of the world of men and women, should be able to get together even the frailest framework on which a suspicion could be hung—a suspicion involving an acquaintance with men and women. He could not quite see how his sister could connect him with the mysterious incidents of the night, unless she imagined . . . . but what will not girls imagine?

"I hope you got some sleep," he said. "I did not. I came downstairs again and went from room to room."

"Yes," she said; "I heard you. I could not understand it."

"There was not much to understand," said he. "It was natural that, considering all things, I should wish to find out all that there was to find out."

"And did you succeed?" she inquired, in the tone of one who is quite disinterested in regard to a subject under discussion.

He gave some attention to his *oeufs à la princesse* before he replied, and even then he prefaced his reply by a brief criticism of the comestible, taking another piece of dry toast, which he buttered with great care—as if he were mixing a squeeze of oil paints on a palette.

"All? I don't know what you call all," he said. "At any rate, I came down to the billiard-room and waited there for a while; then I waited in the hall for a while; and finally I went to both drawing-rooms, this room, the library, and the dining-room. Then I went up to bed. I saw nothing, I heard nothing. Is that 'all' enough for you? What do you think of the business now that you can think of it in daylight, Doris? Daylight thoughts are usually sounder than midnight thoughts in these matters."

"What do you call 'these matters,' Arthur?" she asked.

"'These matters'? Oh, the matters that kept us awake," said he.

"Arthur, I don't know whether or not you are keeping anything back from me," she said gravely. "But what I do know is that, unlike you, I have no uncertainties about sleeping or waking, and I am ready to affirm that I distinctly saw something; no, I will not merely say *something*. I saw the figure of a girl, wearing a loose robe with

something of blue in its texture, at the door of my dressing-room, and a moment afterwards in the corridor. Did you see her at any time last night? I noticed how you glanced round the room exactly as I did when you turned on the light of the lamp."

He looked up quickly from his plate.

"Yes, you saw it—you saw her," she said in a whisper, clasping her hands. He could hear her quick breathing.

"We agreed that I was asleep," he said. "You came to me the first time with a story of seeing something in your corridor, and knowing that you are not the sort of girl to imagine a thing of that sort, I took you seriously, and went back to the billiard-room after I had taken you upstairs. Then—well, we agreed that I fell asleep, and I admit that—that—I paid you the compliment of seeing in a dream all that you saw in reality. I must say that I was rather upset—if I had not been upset I would not have returned as I did to the room. I don't quite know what I expected to see, but I assure you that I saw nothing. Now, that's all that I mean to say about last night, no matter who may question me."

"I will not question you," she said slowly. "There is nothing for me to question you about. You believe that I saw—all that I saw—all that I told you?"

He benevolently overlooked the fact of the repetition of the question, and said at once:

"I paid you the compliment of seeing her myself."

"Her?—her?—of seeing her?" she cried. "Then you knew——"

"No more questions," he said.

"I do not intend to ask any. Only—what are we to do?" she said.

"Heaven knows!"

He rose from the table and went to a window, looking out upon the lawn with its cypresses, and the green slope down to the lake, beyond which was a cloud of golden foliage, threaded by a naked bough or two. There was still sunshine over all—sunshine seen through an autumn-woven gauze.

Doris was watching him. He felt it. He knew that she knew that he had not told her all that he could tell. He wondered if she was allowing freedom to her fancy in conjecturing what he had left untold. In what direction did her imagination lead her? Was she thinking of some of the possibilities in the life of the natural man, or did her mind run on the supernatural something?

He wondered in what direction his own stream of conjecture should flow. His life's experience was no help to him in this matter; he was conscious of an experience not only outside that of any part of his life, but outside any record that he had read. Like most healthy men, he had a great distaste for any sort of phenomenon that could not be easily explained on a basis of simple science—science for beginners, so to speak; and he had an especial distaste for mental and spiritual phenomena. He was the type of man that had ducked witches and burned sorcerers. He had once believed that Marconi was a charlatan, and that the X-rays were impossible. He had wondered at a man of the ability of Sir William Crookes giving an hour of his attention to what was called the investigation of the occult; and he hoped that Sir Oliver Lodge would devote his life to the production of an apparatus for dispelling coal-gas fogs and avoid the Society for Psychical Research. And yet he was the man who was chosen by Fate to experience something

the counterpart of which had never been recorded by science or quasi-science, or even pseudo-science.

It had been a great shock to him to be associated with so unusual an incident as that of Olive Austin in respect of the annihilation of her memory; but such cases had been heard of before, and the explanation of what had happened, which was given to him by the doctors, was quite scientifically plausible. But this other experience of his—this—this—hallucination,—that was the word he wanted—hallucination; he was the victim of an hallucination so strange that——

He put his hand into his pocket listlessly. It came in contact with the garnet and pearl hairpin.

He turned away from the window and went out of the room, picking up his cap in the hall.

He went to the stables, where half a dozen dogs were awaiting him, including the half-bred mastiff that had howled three times during the night. This was what he liked—his joyful whining with a suppressed bark now and again, these sinuous, insinuating gestures, ventral grovellings, playful lickings of his hands, deeds of daring to attract his attention, and then the faithful falling in to heel with a show of unforgotten duty—all this was a delight to him; and also the whinny that came from a loose-box at the sound of his coming, the sight of a bay head with a white starred forehead looking over a half door, the clank of iron shoes upon the iron tiles, the whistled tune of a groom, the ringing of the handle of a bucket against the side, and the swish of the water after the lurch of the pump-handle. Everything that he heard and saw was a delight to him, because it was all so usual; and yet he was ordering a groom to put a saddle on Barney, his big Irish hunter.

He had something on his mind, something unusual, and he was on his way to investigate it.

He had plenty of time to think out what course he should pursue. He did not try to do the nine-mile ride to Calthorpe Place within the hour. After his canter during the first mile he forced the Irishman to take things less strenuously, and having succeeded in restraining him in his desire to take an obstructing turnip-waggon in a leap, he so mortified the proud spirit of Barney that he had no need to ride with a tight rein; the animal ambled along the road like any gipsy vanguard—he that had worn the blue rosette at the Dublin Horse Show.

Of course, Olive must be seen in the first instance, and then—but he did not want to see any one but Olive. And what was he to say to her when he should see her?

This was a point on which he had not come to a decision, though he thought of nothing else, until he reached the park fence at Calthorpe Place and shortened his route by half a mile by sending Barney at the obstacle, which he cleared by about eighteen inches. It was while he was riding slowly along the park track that he thought the best thing he could do would be to put the jewelled hairpin into her hand and allow her to speak.

He had scarcely settled this point when he came upon her, walking on the paddock avenue. Her attitude was one that suggested pensiveness. She was walking slowly, and with her head slightly bent. She seemed almost startled at his approach, and she scarcely smiled while greeting him. He dismounted, and whistled to a boy who was sweeping up leaves to lead the horse to the stables.

"How have you been since we last met?" said he. "By the way, how long is it since we last met?"

She smiled, but rather faintly.

"You left here at six—five minutes to six," she replied. "Sir Everard said you would be at home at seven."

"It was ten minutes past. But how long is it since we parted, Olive?"

She looked at him and he saw that she was puzzled.

"Since we parted?" she said. "Don't you remember when you shook hands with me last?"

"You seem to be a little pensive to-day," he remarked, after a minute's crushing through crisp leaves.

"I have reason to be," she said. "I have just had a letter from my father. He tells me that he is returning home in a few days with his wife. Oh, yes; he has been married for more than a week, he says—a charming lady whom he met at the hotel at Homburg. I am to go home—that is what he says, home; and it is the thought of this home that makes me feel miserable. I am full of doubts and fears. I wonder if I ever did love my father. It shocks me that such a question should have to be answered."

"And the answer?"

"The answer that comes to me shocks me still more. I only saw him twice at Lucerne. I made an attempt—oh, I tried very hard—to have some affection for him, but alas! . . . Was I ever so undutiful as to care nothing for my own father?"

"I do not think that you were ever undutiful. Perhaps you loved him; you had not seen very much of him."

"Editha told me all that she knew of my family history."

"Oh! All that she knew?"

"She did not seem to know very much. It was in America that my mother died and I was born. Editha

said that he never told any one in the county that he had a daughter until he brought me home from my school in Paris. And that, she said, so annoyed some people that we had not so many friends as we should have."

"Of course—of course, that would annoy people. People like to hear all about these things. And yet, in spite of all that you heard from Editha, you do not feel any affection for your father; therefore you are downcast? Don't you think that making the acquaintance of a stepmother, a lady whom your father met and married within six weeks at a Homburg hotel—friendships are of a tropical growth at Continental watering-places—don't you think that making her acquaintance will compensate you for losing the society of Editha?"

"I know as much of her as I do of my father," she said. "Both are strangers to me. And I am to leave here by the end of the week and join them at—what is the name of the place?"

"Holm Lea," he replied. "It is rather a picturesque place. You may like it. Would it help you if I were to call upon you now and again, Olive?"

Her face brightened, but only for a moment.

"I am sure it would be a help—more than a help. I like you better than any one except Editha," she said.

"You promised to tell me when you love me," said he. "You have nothing to say to me on that point to-day?"

"Nothing, except that I was thinking of you last night more than I have ever thought. It was very curious."

"What, your thinking of me?"

"I did not quite mean that. The queer thing is that for more than a week I have been having a dream of visiting a house that I have no recollection of ever seeing in

reality. But it is the same house in every dream,—a large square hall panelled in oak with a marble bust in one corner and the model of an old ship beside it; two pictures of dainty shepherds and shepherdesses; a drawing-room approached by a sort of gallery with shallow steps: sometimes it is one room, sometimes another; all the details come out quite vividly."

"Strange. And is there a billiard-room?"

She seemed surprised at his suggestion.

"Last night I dreamt for the first time of being in the billiard-room," she said.

"Anything remarkable?" he asked.

"You were there too," she said. "You were sitting in a chair at a fire. I startled you when I entered, but—you—you talked to me, and I was conscious of my love for you having come back, and I told you so."

"As you will tell me some day."

"If it ever does come back. But I felt all the pleasure of being near you; and then . . . then somehow a beautiful hairpin that I have—a pearl encircled with garnets—dropped upon the carpet. I suppose it was that awakened me."

"Have you the hairpin still? It was one that I bought for you when we were at Lucerne," said he. "A pearl and garnets—the pearl was you, and I of course was the garnet; that was Sir Everard's joke. Did you wear the hairpin yesterday?"

"I wore it last night at dinner," she replied. "And now comes the strangest thing of all, for this morning it was gone from the dressing-table where I had laid it."

"No, not the strangest thing of all," said he. "This is the strangest thing of all, is it not?"

He put the jewel into her hand.

She looked at it, and then looked at him. She was amazed.

"Is it possible that even my memory of things happening from day to day is failing me?" she said. "I feel sure that I wore this at dinner last night, and that I laid it on my dressing-table when I was going to bed; and yet—how do you come to have it?"

"That is stranger than the strangest thing that has yet happened," said he. "I picked it up from the rug in the billiard-room in my house last night. I had a vision of your appearing beside me when I sat at the fire—of your telling me that you were all to me that you once were. I was overjoyed to feel you once again within my arms, but in the rapture of the moment your hair was loosened; you had lost the jewelled pin, you said, and I was carrying the lamp to give us a chance of finding it, when unfortunately I forgot the wires and it was extinguished. When it was relighted you were not to be seen; but I found the hairpin."

"And the house—did I describe your house? Is it of your house that I have been dreaming with such regularity?" she cried.

"You described the hall and one of the drawings-rooms. The bust in marble is in the hall, and the model of the old ship."

She looked strangely at the hairpin and then gazed at him.

"What am I to say?" she cried almost piteously. "How could such a thing happen? How could a dream—a dream——? Surely a dream is nothing—nothing material; and yet—— Oh, how could it happen?"

"God knows! God knows!" said he.

She stood before him, an expression of bewilderment on her face—helpless bewilderment.

"What am I to say?" she cried. "Can you tell me how it is possible? Have you ever heard of so curious a thing happening? Should I tell Editha? Am I to be endowed with the power of actually being where I dream that I am—the power of turning my dream into reality while I am dreaming it? Tell me if this thing that has happened does not force me to ask such a question?"

"The idea is too remote from all experience to be considered," said he.

"Could science explain it, I wonder? Is there an instance recorded of such a thing?"

"I cannot tell. I should not like to hazard a reply, considering how little I know of science and its development. But when we are told that a thought is the result of a displacement of matter, why may we not hold that a dream is something material? My poor brain cannot grapple with such a theory, but that is possibly because I have never given any thought to the technique of dreams; I don't know of any word but this to express what I mean—the technique—the machinery of dreaming. I have slept and had dreams and never asked myself what either meant. I never asked myself why, when people hear or see anything funny, they laugh. How is it that an idea—something that we think of as being impalpable as air—can in a moment change the aspect of a man's face, to say nothing of his body, which may be sent rocking to and fro in a paroxysm? Oh, every day makes us aware of the fact that there are forces in nature of which we know nothing."

"If this had happened to any one but me, you would not have thought of it; you would have found some simple physical explanation of it," she said. "But it has happened to me, and, knowing that I am not just as other people are, you think yourself justified in talking about curious forces of nature. I feel that you are right, too. I will tell you what one of the figures—those beautiful shapes whom I saw during that interval, before your voice called me back to earth—I will tell you what she said to me; I have told no one else: 'You shall be as one of us: you shall be endowed as we are endowed.' Those were the very words. And now you are beginning to think of me as a sort of elfin queen, and your love for me is changing just as I am beginning to feel that—that——"

He took her hand tenderly.

"Do not stop there," he said. "Tell me that you are beginning to love me, Olive."

"Do not ask me to say it now: it may be beginning—that is, it may be coming back to me," she said. "I know that when I awoke from my dream last night, I felt a certain sense of delight—exhiliration—as if I had found at last something for which I had been looking."

"That was love," he cried. "Dearest, you had been in my arms; my kisses were on your face."

Her face flushed at his words.

"But that meant the perfecting of love, and I do not even know that mine is beginning," said she.

"It began nearly a year ago," he said.

"You told me of it; and I told you that I felt as if that was the love of another girl—not of me. Do not say anything more, Arthur—do not ask me to say anything

more just now. Be certain that I will keep my promise, and confess to you when it comes back to me."

They had walked side by side to the house. Sir Everard and Lady Calthorpe had been cub-hunting all the morning. They were in much better spirits than their guests during lunch. Editha spoke with complacency of Mr. Austin's return to England. Sir Everard said that he was not surprised to hear of his marrying, and expressed the wish that he were remaining absent for at least another year.

"We shall both miss Olive dreadfully," said Editha. "But we have told her that she must never forget that this house is her home. Whatever may happen, she will always find us true to her."

"I cannot think of myself as having any other home than this," said Olive. "I feel that I am leaving my best friends and going among strangers."

Arthur looked at her. He refrained from saying that he too had a home waiting for her; but there was a distinct pause in the conversation to allow of his saying so.

He rode homeward almost immediately after lunch, and found on the library table a letter from his sister telling him that she could no longer remain at King's Croft: she had accepted an invitation to pay a visit to Mrs. Carew.

CHAPTER XXI

THE text of the letter which he received from Doris was not illuminating. It did not tell him whether his sister had acted upon a sudden impulse of terror at the prospect of continuing to live in a house which in the language of the servants' hall was "haunted," or whether she felt that he was somehow illicitly connected with the peculiar incidents of the night. He rather thought it was the word "haunted"—it had sprung to her lips when she appeared at the entrance to the billiard-room—that had caused her to fly; she could scarcely think that he was personally trafficking with the powers of darkness—that he was in touch with the Evil One. But whatever was the cause of her flight the fact remained the same: she had forsaken the roof that had sheltered her, and he was alone.

He did not know whether to blame her or not, and he did not know whether he was sorry or glad that she had gone. He found that he had a great deal of business to get through before the night, and he set himself to his work without delay. There were farm questions to answer: appeals from the decision of the land bailiff—decisions respecting roofing, thatching, zincing, paling, fencing, and the innumerable matters which, though seemingly paltry beyond the power of the language of the infinitely little to

define, are of prodigious importance to the community who trust to their mother earth for sustenance and find that she is a cruel stepmother. He attacked every question without reserve, and all the time that he was struggling with his arrears, worrying out point after point of enormous insignificance, the thought was overhanging him like a canopy:

"*She may come to me again to-night.*"

So quickly does the awful become the commonplace, the abnormal become the usual, that he actually found himself looking forward to her coming—he actually found himself in the billiard-room an hour before midnight, awaiting her coming with something of the throb of the bridegroom beating in his heart. He waited until midnight, and he could not have told whether he was glad or sorry that she had not come.

In the morning he found himself thinking about her departure from Calthorpe Place for her father's house at Holm Lea. What effect would that change have upon his prospects? he asked himself. Was he prepared to visit Mr. Austin and the second Mrs. Austin at Holm Lea? And if he were to visit them, and to learn from Mr. Austin that he had no intention of giving his consent to his, Arthur Garnett's, suit, what would happen?

These were nice questions, all of them, and they had to be faced sooner or later. But a nicer question still was one that referred to Olive only: would her change of scene bring her closer to him, or send her farther away from him?

She thought that she had begun to love him again, and he felt sure that if she could but remain with the Calthorpes, he would soon come to be all to her that he had been in the

old days—he thought of them as the old days, though they were only the days of two months ago. But under her father's roof, in the midst of strange influences, who could tell what would happen?

But in all his perplexities of thought he heard no whisper of a voice suggesting to him the possibility of his relieving himself of his burden by adopting the very obvious course of thinking no more of Olive Austin—this girl who was not as other girls, this girl who was subject to certain influences which were not quite those of the nature which mortals have always before their eyes. Not once did it occur to him that he should seek a way of escape from his perplexities. He had not easily come to love this girl. He had struggled against the inevitable; but, having come to love her, nothing that had happened since had affected his love. He would fight the whole world for her—that was what he had felt when his sister told him what she believed would be the consequence of his marrying Olive Austin; and this is what the healthy fighting male animal feels when he is truly in love. He has no objection in the least to fighting with anything else that is masculine—in fact, he is rather given to issuing challenges. But Arthur Garnett went farther: he was ready to face even the feminine for her sake—the bellicose feminine, with claws and with a tongue capable of being equally irritating. He loved Olive Austin and he would not give her up. Even if she never came to him confessing that her love had returned to her, he would not give her up.

It was his steadfastness in this respect that saved him from considering with any great measure of anxiety what would be the attitude of her father in regard to him on his return. He did not know, nor did he care greatly, if Mr.

Austin would renew his attempt to make terms with him: he felt every confidence in his own capacity to face the man again as he had once faced him. He would not allow his love for Olive to induce him to do anything that he would regret doing ever afterwards. The girl's father might be extremely disagreeable, but he could not prevent the man who loved his daughter from continuing to love her. Feeling confident of this, he gave no anxious thought to the question of making terms with Mr. Austin.

Three days after he had paid his visit to Calthorpe Place he got a letter of a few lines from Editha, telling him that she had something to communicate to him and asking him if he could spare her an hour. Would he ride across country and see her on the afternoon of the day he got her note? She mentioned that Olive had gone to Holm Lea.

Of course, he rode to Calthorpe Place without an hour's delay, and found Editha awaiting him alone. Sir Everard was attending to some business at a distance.

Lady Calthorpe looked pale and perturbed. Her eyes were restless. She was clearly in a rather nervous condition. He put a commonplace question or two to her which she answered at random—inappropriately. She had something on her mind.

"I am glad that you have come," she said. "We will sit in the breakfast-room. We shall not be disturbed."

He followed her and shut the door. She pointed to a seat, but she herself did not sit down. She walked to the window and pulled up a blind, then took a couple of paces to and fro with bent head and hands nervously interlocked.

"What is the matter? You are nervous," he said, gazing at her.

She stopped her pacing, and looked at him anxiously; but she did not speak for some moments.

"Arthur," she said at last, "I do not know how I am to tell you what has happened. But Everard thinks that I should tell you."

"I am not afraid to hear anything that you have to tell, my dear Editha," said he. "It has a bearing upon Olive and me?—nothing else is worth hearing."

"It is something so strange—so far outside ordinary experience——"

"Perhaps I could parallel it."

"No, no; it is without a parallel in the experience of man. Arthur, you cannot but know that since her accident Olive has not been quite as other people—leaving the annihilation of her memory outside the question altogether."

"I have good reason to be aware of that."

"I wonder if she told you something of what she told to me—an impression that she sometimes had of being apart from herself, of scrutinising herself from a distance as if she were altogether another person?"

He nodded.

"She told me of it for the first time on the evening of our arrival home," continued Lady Calthorpe. "I had asked her to play something on the piano, and she did so more exquisitely than I had ever known her to play. When I made some remark she told me that she had felt that it was not she who was playing, but—the other—the other; and then she let me know that she was sometimes conscious of that strange impression—a sort of second

self doing things for which she was not responsible. I was rather frightened."

"Who would not be?"

"The next night I had occasion to go down the corridor off which her room opened—Bertie had a sore throat and I had been to the nursery. Passing her door I heard a sound—a curious sighing sound, that gave me the feeling that it came from something that was moving about the room. Perhaps that was not much—it would not have seemed much, but I had heard such sounds before. When she was lying on the bed in the hotel at Lucerne you had called to her—you had called to her to come back; you were kneeling at the bedside and were on the verge of delirium. Just then—just before the doctor spoke asking me to summon his colleague—I heard that same sighing sound: not exactly a sigh—more like the breathing of some one who is very weary. Everard heard it too. It hovered over our heads, and then it came from the bed—from her. A minute afterwards she was alive. . . . Arthur, that is the sound which I heard when I was alone in the corridor. Alone? I don't know: I felt a breath of air on my face—I had felt it when I heard the sounds at Lucerne; and in the corridor I saw a strange light—a faint, faint light—the faintest moonlight ever seen through a white mist."

Lady Calthorpe was trembling. She had become pallid. He put a chair close to her. She fell into it.

"You told Everard of this?" he said, in a voice that had become husky.

"I told him. He went along the corridor, but he neither heard nor saw anything," she replied. "But that is not

all. Listen to me, Arthur." She had risen once more in the excitement of narration, and she laid a hand upon his arm. "Listen. The night before last she had gone to bed rather earlier than usual. A telegram arrived for her. We supposed it came from her father and contained some instructions for her; so it did. At any rate, I thought it right to let her have it without delay. I went to her room, saying when outside the door that I was there and asking if I might go in with the telegram. She did not answer, and I gathered that she was asleep; so I entered her room. Arthur, I entered, and saw two figures. Olive was lying asleep upon the bed, and seated on the side of the bed at her feet was—Olive! There they were before my eyes—the two—the two!"

"Great heavens! And you are alive to tell me!"

"I shrieked! Who could remain unmoved? But I was only overcome when I saw that the face on the pillow was the face of a dead woman. The eyes were open—open as are the eyes of a person who is just dead—glassy, empty, staring! . . . I shrieked and put my hands before my eyes. In another minute Everard was beside me, and so was Olive; the bed was empty; she was supporting me, and asking me what was the matter, even before Everard had come to me from his dressing-room."

Editha Calthorpe was gripping the arm of the man before her with fervid fingers, while she said her last words. When she paused, breathless with excitement, she still held him in the silence. Then suddenly her fingers relaxed. He thought that she was fainting and put an arm about her. But she did not faint. She walked without needing his help to a chair that was near the window, and seated herself

with deliberation. She lay back and folded her hands on her lap and gazed out of the window.

"I have told you; Everard said that I should tell you," she said, in a low, firm voice. "I have told you. You are not a man to say that I was dreaming, Arthur."

"No, no," he said. She saw that his face was white; she knew that her own was so too.

There was a long silence in the room. He was thinking if he should tell her of his experiences at King's Croft a few nights before. He came to the conclusion that he should refrain from doing so. He walked to the farther window and looked out, but without saying a word.

Editha was the first to speak. She had risen from her seat and come behind him.

"Arthur," she said, in a very low voice. "Arthur, what are we to say?—what are we to do?"

"God knows," he said reverently, without turning his head.

"You still love her?"

In a second he had turned and was looking at her straight in the face.

"What has happened to forbid my loving her?" he said in a firm, though not a loud tone.

After the lapse of a few seconds his head fell; he moved away from the window and walked slowly to a chair, in which he seated himself heavily. He leant forward in an attitude that was habitual with him when thinking out some point. He had assumed it in his room at Saas Fée before telling Olive that he loved her, and in his room at Lucerne on the afternoon of the catastrophe. He leant forward, with his chin resting on his right hand, his elbow

being on his knee. There was another silence before he said:

"I never loved her more than I do now. I have never varied. What has happened that should make me change, Editha?"

She did not make an attempt to answer him. Some minutes had passed before she seated herself on the little settee.

"I wonder how Dr. Haydon would drag the brain into these things that we have seen with our own eyes?" she said. It was a strange transition from love to science. "I fancy that he would say nothing about Olive's brain—it would be mine that he would pronounce defective. You do not think that my brain deceived me, Arthur?"

He shook his head.

"The brain has nothing to do with it—neither your brain nor hers," he said.

"What has to do with it?" she said.

Once again he shook his head.

She drew her chair close to his across the carpet, and then, leaning toward him, said:

"Arthur, what is the truth? Do you recollect how she received you when you came to her room and she heard your voice? She remembered your voice. What did she say? That it was your voice that had brought her back—brought her back from where? You remember that she talked of being in some place, some intermediate place of happiness—a causeway between heaven and earth, she called it—and she was angry because she had been forced to obey your voice?"

"I remember it all. I am not likely to forget it; but it made no difference to my love for her," he said.

"I had a feeling at that time of what was the truth," said she, and her voice sank still lower. "I suggested to Dr. Haydon something of what was on my mind, but of course he waived me away with a reference to the brain. Listen to me, Arthur. That girl was dead. There was no spark of life in her body; both doctors acknowledged so much. They declared that every test they had applied to her had the same result—dead. Their artificial respiration made no impression upon her. It was the sound of your voice that brought back her soul. She loved you. Love is of the spirit, not of the brain. People tell us that many of the things which we do now—the habits which we retain, the superstitions—are relics which we have inherited from our ancestors of thousands and thousands of years ago—survivals, they call them; we have not lost them, although there is no reason why we should retain them, any more than there is a reason why the cat and the dog should turn themselves round twice before lying down, as their ancestors did in the jungle grass. These are material survivals relating to the animal life of the race; but love—our love—may it not be a survival of the spiritual side of our nature? Arthur, her soul had left her body; and it was her soul that heard your voice and obeyed its call. All this may sound absurd to the scientific man. But we all know that science is progressive. Its knowledge is never complete. It can base its judgments only upon what has come under its observation, and I do not think that any one, scientific or otherwise, has had experience of such a 'case'—the doctors referred to it as a 'case'—as that of Olive Austin."

Arthur remained silent for some time; at last he raised his head, saying:

'If you think that this belief can explain anything of what has occurred——"

"There is nothing that it may not explain," she cried. "She had powers—powers that were wholly spiritual. We did not tell you how, a few days ago, she entreated Everard not to go to Wharfeleigh about the dynamo, and the next day we learned that a terrible accident had occurred just when he would have been there. But she had always a tendency in this way—powers of premonition."

"I thought, when she talked of the White Causeway, that a faint echo was lingering in her mind of the snow causeway which we saw at Fée," said he, musingly. "The idea of that mystical path—a communication between earth and heaven—appealed to her imagination. She told me one evening that she had seen white figures upon it. Editha, I do not know more than you have told me about this mystery. It is a mystery, and it is likely to remain one. I do not say that your attempt to account for much that has happened is not possible. A mystery can only be considered mystically. Things of the soul can best be considered by the spiritually minded. It is the pure in spirit that shall see God—the Mystery of mysteries. I can say nothing, except that Olive is as dear to me as ever, and that I am convinced that she is now in an intermediate state. Her memory will return to her. I told her that the White Causeway meant love, and you have said something of love. When her feet are set once more on that mystical causeway of love, she will be herself —only herself as she used to be, sweet and tender and spiritual."

Tears were in his voice; she could not see if they were in his eyes, because her own were overflowing. She could

not even see the hand that he held out to her; but she knew that he was holding out a hand to her, and she put hers forth to meet it.

They parted without another word. He left her weeping in a chair.

CHAPTER XXII

ARTHUR GARNETT rode slowly homeward through the autumn avenues of the park, and along the straight highway. He heard the shots that came from a battue of pheasants in Lord Haverton's preserves, and over the tops of the trees in the distance he saw a bird or two flying wildly. Some miles farther on he came upon a few riders. They were coming down a lane off the high road, and as he passed the entrance, one of them hallooed to him, and put his horse to a trot to catch him up. Arthur did not at once see that his friend was Christy; but when he recognised him he drew rein and waited for him.

Christy had not much to say about the run; but then, Christy was usually reticent about his runs. He hunted for the fun of hunting, not for the sake of collecting material for narration. He could not see that there was much fun to be got out of relating experiences of which the ordinary were boring and the extraordinary disbelieved.

Oh, yes; they had found, but had killed before half the field knew that it had gone away. Then they had spent the rest of the morning waiting for young Toovey, the new huntsman, to do as well as old Toovey had done; but young Toovey proved disappointing, and the Master had surpassed himself in his criticism of the huntsman's performance, and to say so much was to say a good deal. Arthur

understood the force of Christy's criticism of the Master's remarks. The Master was a lyddite shell upon occasions.

"How is Doris?" asked Arthur, when Christy paused.

"She's all right," replied Christy. "What a comfort that she and the mater hit it off so well; but who wouldn't hit it off well with Doris? By the way, wasn't she a bit huffed with you about something before she came to us?"

"Not that I know of," said Arthur. "She did not say anything about—about my abusing her for sitting up late? No, now that I come to think of it, it was the other way about—it was she who abused me for it."

"She didn't say anything definite, but somehow I gathered that there had been strained relations, but nothing serious. She still thinks well of you; though—well, she spoke out about Olive—to be more exact, of old Austin. My aunt! I don't blame her. You haven't had a chance of seeing the second Mrs. Austin?"

"Has he brought her to Holm Lea? I know that Olive left the Calthorpes a few days ago."

"Poor Olive! Arthur—old chap, I'm sorry that you can't see your way to—— Well, well! It can't be helped. But the bride! Lorramercy!—the bride! I saw her with the happy bridegroom in their landau yesterday. I nearly dropped when he pulled up and presented me. I couldn't get it out of my head that I wasn't taking off my hat to a Chinese idol—no, something in the South Seas—a Samoan Scare god—the figure-head of the *Saucy Arethusa* or the brave old *Témeraire*! And her voice! A rich contralto—the sort of contralto that you hear in a rookery when you are thinning it out."

"But she is a rich contralto?—if she has the rich it is enough for Austin."

'I believe she is all right there. I heard some one say that she was the widow of an American millionaire. I saw no reason to doubt it."

"As bad as that?"

"Worse! And there's a son. I saw him in Austin's motor. He was exceeding the statutory limit; but that was a good thing for humble but fastidious pedestrians. He didn't wear goggles. I hope he will be induced to do so, and a mask as well. By George! It made me mad to think of that girl among such a crew. Isn't there a story about a princess who became a farm drudge, and was forced to mingle on equal terms with the swine? Well, if there wasn't one before there's one now! Poor Olive! I suppose, old man, you couldn't see your way—— Well, never mind. I suppose it will all come right in the end; but in the meantime—poor Olive!"

"That's just it. The curse of the situation is that we can say nothing but that—'poor Olive!'—that we can do nothing for her. If it makes you mad, Chris, how many sane moments have I, do you fancy?"

Chris shook his head, mournfully murmuring, "Poor old Arthur!" After a sympathetic pause, he added:

"I wonder how it would have worked if the Calthorpes had refused to let her go back to her father?"

"It wouldn't have done at all," said Arthur. "How could they prevent her father from claiming her? But of course, I wish that he had seen his way to remain at Homburg or wherever he was, for another month or two."

"If the father could not have been prevented from claiming her he cannot now be prevented from keeping her—keeping her away from any suitor he may have a grudge against," said Christy. "That's what I have been

thinking. I wish you luck when you make your call upon the bride. The bride will be an important factor in the problem which you have to tackle. You would do well to conciliate the goddess with offerings. Poor old Arth!"

"I don't feel comfortable at the prospect," said Arthur. "And yet—well, I'm bound to face anything that is to be faced, even the face of Medusa, so you need say no more about it."

"What I can't get at is how such a rotter as old Austin should be father to such a girl as Olive," said Christy, confidentially. "They talk about heredity and that! Well, I wonder where heredity comes in here. Anyhow, good luck to you!"

"Thank you. Love to Doris," said Arthur, as Christy turned off to the Lamberton-Hipsworthy road which led to his home.

The remainder of Arthur's ride was lonely. But he did not mind that; he had enough to occupy his mind for some hours, and it was rather strange that he should begin to think first of the problem enunciated by Christy. It was not quite an original problem, that of a fig being derived from a thistle, a grape from a thorn; but its force had never appealed so strongly to Arthur as it did when he began to think of Olive's being the daughter of such a father. Of course, the easy way of getting rid of such an incongruity is to transfer the responsibility from the father to the mother. Arthur had never seen the girl's mother, but he had no difficulty in feeling certain that she had been a sweet and good woman, who worried herself to death thinking of her daughter's future subjected to the influence of such a man as Ambrose Austin.

Olive's mother had lived with her husband at Holm Lea

only for a couple of years, and then she accompanied him to America. He had hoped to retrieve his shattered fortunes by gambling in silver in the Western States. Ten or eleven years later he returned to England, a widower with a little girl, whom he promptly sent to school in Paris, where she remained until she was nineteen. Then he had brought her to her home.

This was all that Arthur knew of the domestic history of the family; but he had no doubt whatever that the mother had been a sweet woman, since he was convinced that it was from her that Olive derived her sweetness, her spiritual nature.

And it was the memory of such a wife that Mr. Austin had outraged by bringing to his house, to be a mother to his child, the vulgar harridan described with a good deal of force by Christy.

And it was to the good offices of this creature that he, Arthur Garnett, was compelled to appeal for the furtherance of his suit! If he were to make an enemy of this woman, she would not scruple, after the manner of the traditional stepmother, to make Olive's life a bitterness to her, and to prevent him, Arthur Garnett, from entering the house where she lived.

The reflection was not an agreeable one. He remembered how, at that Alpine village where they had stayed, he had for some days felt that the course of his true love was likely to run more smoothly than the current of such a stream is said to do. He laughed grimly now at the recollection. Not three months had passed since he had told Olive that he loved her, and had heard her sweet response, and yet he seemed to have had a year's experience of the turbulence of a true love's rivulet. The second

Mrs. Austin seemed to be the final boulder precipitated into its course. She might be an insuperable obstacle; but he knew that she would not succeed in damming the stream. He loved Olive, and not all the stepmothers in Christendom would succeed in barrageing the current of his love.

It was not until the night came and he was sitting alone in his library that his consideration fell away from these material things to the more shadowy ones which demanded his attention. He had to give some thought to that curious story told to him by Editha Calthorpe. A few weeks earlier he would have been ready with the doubts, which the rational and logical man has always at hand for the dispersion of the mists and shadows enveloping a story of something outside the experience of mankind. He would have been ready to suggest that the second object which Lady Calthorpe saw had been projected from within her brain, not from without.

In the interval, however, he had had such experiences as stifled his scepticism. He could even think Lady Calthorpe's suggested explanation of what had occurred worthy of consideration.

Love, she had suggested, might be the survival of a period—it certainly was a prehistoric period—when wholly spiritual conditions prevailed in the world. She took the first chapter of the book of Genesis literally. She believed in the Fall of man. So did some of the wisest men who ever lived. A better way of accounting for the innumerable problems of life does not exist. The mystery of pain, of labour, of the triumphs of evil—in fact, the whole mystery of man's life could be explained on the basis of the Fall. And Editha Calthorpe, believing this, had no difficulty in

believing that there had once been a time of spirituality, and that love was the strongest, perhaps the only, survival of that period. And her speculations had reached this point only to account for the return of life to Olive Austin's body in obedience to the voice of the man whom she loved.

He sat there thinking over what she had said to him; and then, of course, he began to consider how far scientific research would go in explanation of some of the phenomena —he had now got into a scientific mode of thought—the phenomena which had occurred. He knew that science now recognised a power known as hypnotism. How would it do to assume that Olive Austin was capable, unknown to herself, of exercising this power upon certain temperaments —that she was capable of exercising it passively, without the aid of "woven paces and of waving hands," so that it affected Editha Calthorpe when in her presence, causing her to see that second mysterious figure when none existed, and causing him, Arthur Garnett, to believe that he, though at a distance, had seen and touched the girl herself?

He was more inclined (such is the effect of a scientific training, more or less) to accept this theory of what was called hypnotism, rather than the spiritual suggestions made by Editha.

He called to mind the fact that Doris and others in the house had had at least a portion of his experience; and then—how about his finding the jewelled hairpin? Was there any hypnotic power that was capable, unassisted, of bringing about a transference of matter?

He got up from his chair and began pacing the room. His speculations led him no whither. He was utterly bewildered. He went out of the library and into the hall,

sitting there in the loneliness and silence of the great house.

And then his heart began to beat, for the thought came to him:

"She may appear to me to-night."

He began to have all the expectancy of a lover awaiting the coming of his beloved one. There was no terror in his expectancy. There was no further desire to solve the mystery of her coming. It seemed to him no mystery, but, on the contrary, the most natural thing in the world that she should be by his side now that he was alone.

He waited in vain.

He switched off the light in the hall and sat in the darkness, for there was no moon now, and the logs on the great hearth had smouldered away, until only a red gleam looked out from the heart of the old oak stump that had been blazing all the evening, and was reflected upon the polished bits of the carved wood of the panels of the wall, and upon the ghostly marble head of the old admiral, keeping his hundred years' watch over the deck of his ship in the corner.

Arthur actually became impatient. The night was one of wonderful stillness. There was no sound of rustling leaves, no creak of swinging boughs. He sat there in the darkness and the silence until past midnight. Then he went slowly upstairs to his room, weary with his vigil and greatly disappointed. He felt like a lover whose tryst has not been rewarded. She had broken her tryst this night, and, with the unreasonableness of the true lover, he was ready to call her cruel for allowing him to be alone.

In the morning he found himself more reasonable. He

was able to consider the material situation with some measure of sanity, asking himself if he meant to be content to allow matters to develop automatically—if he meant to run the chance of meeting Olive again at Calthorpe Place or elsewhere, or if he should summon up his courage and make a formal call upon her father and his bride. He had a shrewd impression that if he were to postpone his congratulatory visit to the bride, he might not find his welcome so cordial as he could wish it to be.

But did he wish to receive a cordial welcome at the hands of that woman? Was he anxious to be received as a member of the family? Was he ready to play the mean part of the wealthy lover who ingratiates himself with the family of the girl to whom he has taken a fancy, and throws them over on the day he marries her?

He felt that it would be unspeakably mean of him to begin to visit the Austins, while all the time there was in his heart the resolution to break with them if he were fortunate enough to regain the love of Olive, and to obtain her father's consent—perhaps her stepmother's consent would have to be counted on now—to marry her.

He had foreseen some of the troubles incidental to his wooing of Olive under her father's roof, but he had no idea that they would prove so embarrassing. The afternoon had come before he had made up his mind as to what attitude he should adopt toward Mr. Austin and his wife. The more he considered the matter, the more strongly he felt that it was a great mistake for Olive to have left Calthorpe Place. He did not consider the possibility of Lady Calthorpe's nerves being affected by the presence of a girl about whose existence there was a mystery.

His perplexity as to the first step was solved by the

appearance of Mr. Austin himself in his motor an hour after lunch.

Arthur had a chance of being cordial to him alone; he was not called on to extend his cordiality to Mrs. Austin. He was self-possessed enough to offer his congratulations to his visitor, but he was conscientious enough to accompany them with a smile which he hoped would neutralise their effect. His visitor said something about the influence of a good woman—a really good woman, "and she is becoming rarer every day, my boy"—upon a man's life; but the difficulty that he showed in attaining fluency in the delivery of this sentiment not merely neutralised its effect, but left something over for a sentimental sinking-fund as it were. But he rather thought that a whiskey-and-polly would do him no harm after his long drive. Motoring was, he thought, the best means yet devised of maintaining a perpetual thirst.

When he had had a long drink, which might assuage temporarily the pangs or perhaps the delights of his thirst, he looked round the hall admiringly.

"Fine old place, Garnett, this of yours," he said. "I cannot understand how I have been so seldom under your roof." (Arthur could have informed him, but he thought it better not to do so just at that moment.) "The fact is, I suppose, that I was too fond of change of scene ever to make a model neighbour. Of course, eighteen miles is a good distance to separate neighbours; but one good thing that the motor has done is to make distance a *quantité négligeable*. The motor will prove the greatest social influence of the twentieth century—mark my words."

Arthur ventured to think that it was at any rate the means of making people acquainted with the fact that the

"His perplexity . . . was solved by the appearance of Mr. Austin himself in his motor."

[*To face p.* 262.

county benches ran the county almshouses very close as regards the accommodation afforded to old women; and Mr. Austin laughed heartily—so heartily as to make his host suspicious.

"I hope that in the future, now that we are settling down, you and I, Garnett, will have an opportunity of being fined for exceeding the limit of speed between Holm Lea and King's Croft," said Mr. Austin. "By the way, you'll be interested to hear—but I daresay you are acquainted with it already—that my—my irregular financial position is now likely to be placed on a more satisfactory basis. You heard that my wife was the widow of a distinguished American officer who was by no means unsuccessful as a philanthropist—Colonel Ezra Y. Geyermeyer."

"That must be satisfactory to—to every one, Mr. Austin," said Arthur, when Mr. Austin paused. He was about to say that the change would be satisfactory to Mr. Austin's creditors, but he managed to substitute a more inclusive statement. He knew, however, that Mr. Austin was well aware of the word that had been in his mind.

"In the States, Garnett, millionaires are no more thought of than—than the gold on Solomon's temple," said Mr. Austin.

Arthur marvelled at his biblical knowledge. He had been thinking of survivals recently; one never quite forgot the ways of the jungle or the verses of the nursery Bible.

"Happily they die sometimes," said he, sympathetically.

Again Mr. Austin laughed, this time with some slyness.

"They do," he whispered. "And do you remember what the friend of one of them said when he was asked how much the man had left? 'Every cent,' he replied. That's another good thing: they must leave it all behind

them. My wife is quite comfortably off, Garnett, and she, like so many of her nation, is proud of old England's aristocracy. Holm Lea will soon be a different place. She is generous."

Arthur sat silent. What was there for him to say? He waited.

"She has taken very kindly to Olive," continued Mr. Austin. "Yes, very kindly, and so has her son. I did not mention that she has a son—a nice young chap—likely to make his mark as a financier in the States. He and Olive are naturally thrown a good deal together. You must come and see our family party some of these days, Garnett, you really must. Ah, Garnett, it is only when one has been a bit racketty that one appreciates the hearth, the warm hearth and the warm heart, my boy. By the way, it seems that the *tendresse* which my poor girl entertained for you has departed with her memory. An extraordinary thing, that—quite the most extraordinary that ever came under my notice. I spoke to her about you the day we got back."

"It has not altogether returned, Mr. Austin, but I feel that it is returning," said Arthur. He found it odious to have to talk to this man about Olive, but unfortunately he was her father, and the talk was not to be avoided. "I know that it is returning, and I have no doubt that in time she will be to me as she was before the unhappy accident."

Mr. Austin said a very doubtful, "Perhaps so."

After a space, he added:

"You will remember, Garnett, that I never gave my sanction to your engagement," looking rather attentively meanwhile at the end of the cigar which he was smoking. "Mind, I do not say that in certain circumstances—in

certain eventualities—I might not consider it my duty to bestow her hand upon you; but in the meantime——"

Mr. Austin paused. He did not seem inclined to proceed.

"In the meantime?" said Arthur. "In the meantime?"

"In the meantime we occupy the same relative position that we did when we had our little chat in the billiard-room of the National at Lucerne," said the other. "By the way, I wonder if at that time I mentioned anything about the mortgage which Shansfield holds on Holm Lea. I have a notion that I did; but the awful events of that evening——"

"You suggested that I should accept a transfer of that mortgage," said Arthur, "and I agreed to do so if Willis found there was money enough, and that the security—— But, of course, you said that the security was all right."

"I am glad that I touched upon the matter at that time," said Mr. Austin. "I wish you would personally let me have five or six thousand on account of a new mortgage, Garnett. Of course, you understand that in my altered circumstances—my wife's income is considerably over twenty thousand a year—pounds, not dollars, my dear boy, and she is a generous woman; she will make a clean sweep of all mortgages on the property; but in the meantime—well, you can easily believe, Garnett, that my pride forbids me to be a mere pensioner on my wife. I do not want to draw on her just yet. Scores of these money-lending swindlers would be only too glad to get me into their clutches now; but I'm not exactly a fool, Garnett. I said, 'Not a penny will I take from them if they should go down on their knees to me; I will give my friends the first chance.'"

"Mr. Austin," said he, col
insult me over the answer I g
at Lucerne, but even running t
only give you the same ans
meaning aright—and I do no
lucidity—you would make you
gagement between your daugh
upon my accepting the transfer
you a sum of money on accoun
let me make it clear to you t
mixing up a purely business m
that is not of this character."

"My dear Garnett, you h
wrongly," cried Mr. Austin, with
"What, sir, do you fancy tha
would stoop to make my own
of traffic—huckstering? I am
it is clear that you do not kn

"Then I apologise with all
"And now that we understand e
to let you have

Willis may be an excellent man of business, but he is too fond of prying for my taste. Hang it all, Garnett, it would be too much to expect me to stand that fellow making his inquiries about matters of privacy. I tell you it would be very objectionable to me."

"But how can you expect a business matter like this to be arranged in absolute privacy?" asked Arthur. "The transfer of a mortgage is not like buying a picture post-card. There are deeds which will have to be examined—re-valuation made——"

"Lawyers' tricks—I know them all," cried Mr. Austin. "Look here, Garnett, cannot you appreciate the delicacy of my position? My wife has settled a sum—a very handsome sum—upon me; but you know that I have had creditors. It would be mean of me to draw upon her bounty so soon. I feel that it would. In a month or two, however, she will make a clean sweep of all the mortgages—all the debts. I confessed to her that the estate was not unencumbered; but when I told her the amount she laughed heartily. Thirty or forty thousand pounds is the merest trifle to an American millionaire, Garnett. We have got into a different habit on this side. I believe that a couple of thousand would carry me over the worst just now. You could spare a couple of thousand off your own bat, I'm sure, Garnett."

Garnett became thoughtful. He shook his head.

"I couldn't spare two thousand out of my current account," he said, "but I think I could manage half."

"A thousand pounds doesn't go far," said Mr. Austin, in a grumbling voice. "But if I could have it immediately—if I could take it away with me——"

"I will give you a cheque at once," said Arthur.

"We'll say fifteen hundred, Garnett. Your bankers won't mind your overdrawing, I know."

"A thousand is really my limit."

"Oh, well—don't cross it, Garnett."

Mr. Austin was clearly dissatisfied, and he made no heroic attempt to conceal his feelings. Arthur wrote out a cheque for a thousand pounds, and Ambrose Austin wrote his name under the letters IOU. When he had glanced at the cheque Arthur saw him look at the clock.

"Confound it!" he said; "it's past the bank hour. What were we talking about, anyway, that kept us so late?"

"Wasn't it the progress of the United States of America?" said Arthur, good-humouredly.

Mr. Austin gave a laugh, and without suggesting to Arthur the pleasure that would result from his visiting Holm Lea, took his departure. He had taken Arthur at his word, and had refrained from blending matters of business with the other sort.

Arthur assumed that lending to Mr. Austin was a matter of business, and he knew that Mr. Austin's giving him an IOU for the amount was a matter of form.

CHAPTER XXIII

MR. AUSTIN could not have more than reached his home, even travelling considerably over the statutory limits, before Arthur was visited by Mr. Willis his agent. It was clear that he was not to be permitted to shake off the shackles of business this day. He had not written to Mr. Willis to call upon him, nor had Mr. Willis written to announce his intention of paying his visit. Arthur was rather afraid of him, though he did his best to please him, and to be an obedient principal to him at all times. But Mr. Willis was very strict.

Arthur sometimes assumed a certain amount of lightness in his presence; but before many minutes had passed he was reduced to the position of the cringing employer, trying to make his agent think better of his business capacity. He wondered if by any possibility Mr. Willis had already heard of his having lent Mr. Austin a thousand pounds.

"Come into the library for a minute or two," said the agent, with the official air and some of the dignity of the head master demanding an interview with a boy in his private room.

Arthur said a humble, "Certainly," and tried to look at his ease. But his gait had about it the self-consciousness of the schoolboy who already hears the swish that follows

you endorsed a bill without t
Willis.

"My dear Willis, I would
a club bill, complaining of
your permission," said Arthu
ting me?"

"But you spent some days
Austin when you were abro

"I spent more than a we
Lucerne, and Austin was un
Ambrose Austin to do with

"The bill was accepted by
at least, the names are the
I didn't know that you were

Arthur began to get a lit
schoolboy, he thought it prud

"What has Homburg to do

"How did you chance to see

"I saw it in the hands of a
was lodged," replied Mr. Wi

"But when a man is away on a holiday—— By the way, when does the bill mature?"

Mr. Willis explained that the document was still in its adolescence; it would not reach maturity for some days. Arthur became thoughtful for some minutes.

"I should like a night to think over the matter," said he.

"I fancied that you would," said the agent. "Twenty-four hours at least should be spent in thinking over it."

"Yes; it would take a man at least twenty-four hours trying to remember if he put his name on the back of a bill for—what do you say the amount was?"

"Fifteen hundred pounds."

"Oh, fifteen hundred pounds? Thinking at the rate of—let me see—a trifle over sixty pounds an hour, it would take an average man twenty-four hours to get through fifteen hundred, wouldn't it? Of course, a rapid thinker——"

"I shall be in my office all to-morrow up to bank hour. You can ring me up or wire me if you would like to see me. In your thinkings you would do well, it occurs to me, to ask yourself if you are prepared to have bills presented to you for payment—cheques that you cannot remember signing and spectres of that sort haunting you for the rest of your life."

"I am much obliged to you for suggesting that course of thought to me. Just now I am rather inclined to believe that I should find it too great a tax on my memory."

Mr. Willis then dropped the subject of bills and cheques, and began to talk more definitely of certain leases which were falling in, and of some town property, the value of which was likely to be increased by some edicts of the local

council; and all the time that he was discussing these points with his principal, his principal was considering that last question which had been put to him by his agent; and when his agent had driven away, he continued asking himself if, indeed, he was prepared to face the contingencies hinted at by Mr. Willis.

Ambrose Austin had forged his name on the back of a bill which he had accepted at Homburg, and, not content with the perpetration of this outrage, he had the effrontery to borrow a thousand pounds from the man whose name he had so forged! He assumed that Austin had borrowed the money in order to meet the bill when it should be presented to him in a day or two, and thereby prevent the discovery of his fraud; for in that case, of course, Arthur would never see the bill with the fictitious endorsement. The man had not feared to run the chance of his fraud coming to light, feeling confident that he would not be prosecuted. Would it be like Arthur Garnett to send to gaol the father of Olive?

And then it occurred to Arthur that the fact of Austin's coming to borrow some thousands of pounds, although his wife was extremely wealthy, could only be accepted as evidence of Austin's intention to get as much out of him as he could in exchange for his good-will in respect of Olive; nay, Arthur reflected that he was without evidence of his having secured even Mr. Austin's good-will. But it really did not matter much whether he had it or not; the material point that he had to consider was the blackmailing character of the levy to which he had been subjected by that man.

In fact, Mr. Willis had, with his usual succinctness, brought into one point the material bearings of the whole

matter, when he said that Arthur had to ask himself if he was prepared to have such frauds perpetrated against himself for the rest of his life—Mr. Willis should have said for the rest of Mr. Austin's life.

Arthur Garnett knew that it was not in keeping with his nature to submit to such impositions. He knew that he was so constituted, that the moment he felt that he was being imposed upon, his heart became hard. Even though men who had less experience of the world than he had would see that, on the whole, it is wiser in certain circumstances to submit to extortion than to make a fuss, he had never been able to train himself to weigh carefully the convenience of ignoring an unprincipled transaction against the inconvenience of resenting it. It was this uncompromising spirit on his part that had irritated Mr. Austin at Lucerne, and thus indirectly brought about the catastrophe on the lake.

But he did not care. He could only act according to his lights, and it was under the force of this impulse that he sent a special messenger to the bank with which he did business in the neighbouring town, to stop payment of the cheque which he had just given to Mr. Austin. He knew that the cheque could not have been cashed since Austin had received it, the fact being, as Austin had complained, that the hour at which it had come into his hands was past the time of the closing of the bank. But Mr. Austin was pretty certain to make an early call upon the funds of the establishment in the morning.

It was after he had despatched his messenger that Arthur asked himself if he was prepared to face the inevitable consequence of that action. He knew perfectly well that Mr. Austin would not accept it with meekness. And then,

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one of the occupants of Hol
could he, Arthur Garnett, forbi

He passed one of the most wr
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his stoppage of the cheque. No
would do anything of the sort.
on by such a man as Austin, ev
Olive. At the same time, he w
tain the thought of pleasing his
other wise people as well, by w
the whole Austin connection. T
showed himself to be, the mo
Garnett to marry the daughter.

He had not long to wait for
campaign which he had seen to
rattled up on his motor before A
his newspaper after breakfastin

"No, they are not quite imbecile: they did not cash my cheque," said Arthur.

"What in heaven's name do you mean?" cried the other.

"When I gave you that cheque, Mr. Austin, I did not know that there was a bill which I shall have to meet in a few days—a bill for fifteen hundred pounds. I am sorry that I cannot afford the amount represented by that cheque," said Arthur.

Mr. Austin gave a little start: nothing to speak of—it would have escaped the notice of any one not looking out for some such evidence of his nerves.

"Mr. Garnett," said the elder man, rising from the chair to which he had been waved by the younger—"Mr. Garnett, let me tell you, sir, that I object to be made a fool of."

"I cannot believe that that ever happened to you, Mr. Austin," said Arthur. "It is not a fool that you are—neither am I, to any great extent, I hope."

"You have tried to fool me; a pretty ass I looked when I presented that cheque just now—a row of snub-nosed, pasty-faced clerks looking out from their desks like rabbits from their hutches, grinning from ear to ear. You have made me the laughing-stock of the place, sir. I wish you good morning. And let me tell you that if I ever find you within my gates I shall have you kicked out like a cur—the cur that you are. My daughter marry you! She shall marry a man, sir—a gentleman, and it shall be within the month. We shall see who looks most like the fool then—I or you."

He had been moving gradually to the door all the time he was speaking. His hand was on the knob of the lock

when he delivered his last sentence—Arthur's sentence of exile—and having spoken it, he went out with a bang.

Arthur had not risen from his seat. He heard the motor crunch up the fine gravel of the drive, and the only thought on his mind was that he would not, after all, be called on to prosecute Mr. Austin for forgery; the doubtful bill would be paid in due course by the acceptor. If Austin had not been certain of getting the fifteen hundred pounds from his wife or some one else, he could not have afforded to indulge in the rhetoric of vituperation so freely as he had done.

But a little later some other reflections came to him incidental to Mr. Austin's visit.

. . . . . .

He drove into the local town in the afternoon to have a talk with Mr. Willis, and perhaps with the manager of the bank where he kept his account. When within a mile or so of his destination the triple hoot of a motor-horn sounded behind him. The road was narrow at that part, so he pulled his dogcart as close as possible to the hedge. The machine rushed past, and the second or two that it remained in sight was enough to let him see that Olive and a young man were its only occupants. The girl looked back and nodded before she was whirled away in a swirl of dust.

There was not much in the incident, but somehow it set Arthur Garnett raging inwardly. He felt that if the machine were to get within range of his whip he must lay the lash on the fellow who was at the steering-wheel. The fellow had, he was certain, put on extra speed when passing the dogcart; and this act had, in Arthur's estimation, all the savour of a gross insult. But he felt his own impo-

tence, and it was this consciousness that led him to perceive the pleasurable elements there would be in slashing that young Mr. Geyermeyer across the face with his whip.

He was especially kind to his horse during the remainder of the journey to the town, and he sent him into Mr. Willis's stable, telling the groom to give him a rub down and a drink.

Mr. Willis was not in his office; he had gone up the High Street to the County Club, the managing clerk said. He asked Mr. Garnett if he should ring him up, but Mr. Garnett said that he himself was going to the club, and he would see Mr. Willis there.

The club-house was at the head of the street, and all the principal shops lay between it and Mr. Willis's office; and at the door of one of them—a hardware establishment, with a workshop at the back—a motor was standing, a mechanic in leathern apron and shirt-sleeves kneeling by the machinery part. Close by, with his legs wide apart, was the young man who had recently been driving the machine, and on the front seat of crimson morocco Olive still sat.

Arthur saw with delight the flush that came to her face when he approached—the young man was too greatly interested in the mechanic's job to have a moment to spare. Arthur was speaking to Olive before he was aware of the fact that some one had come up.

"Get down, Olive: I wish to have a chat with you," said Arthur, and it was when the girl made a move that Mr. Geyermeyer first saw him.

"Hullo," said the young man, in the vulgarest Yankee accent Arthur had ever heard. "Hullo; where are you off

insolent way, and then turr

"He'd best look slippy th

Olive strolled up the stre
another word in the hearin

"I am so glad to see y
looking up into Arthur's fac

"Have you anything to t
you agreed to tell me—if y
tone. "Has it come to yo

"I dare not say," she cri
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I think it may only be that I
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But oh, the happiness of se

"My dearest, why are yo
you were only sure I would
moment; you need never re
he is Mrs. Austin's son."

"Yes; Mr. Geyermeyer is I
Arthur, the happiness of beir
But you must not ask me to

shall know when you come to me that you were led by love—the truest love that ever beat in the heart of a woman. Your father will never give his consent to your coming to me, but——"

"Do not speak to me of him," she cried. "Is it wicked? Oh, it must be wicked for one to hate one's father. God forgive me! Arthur, he has been so unkind to me, and that other—the woman's son!"

"Has he annoyed you?—has he insulted you?" said Arthur, suddenly.

"No, no; but it is my father who insists on my going about with him. And the woman! She does not mean to be unkind to me; but she thinks my loss of memory a subject for jesting on. They all joke about it. But he is my father. I must bear it."

"Only until the last doubt as to the truth of your love for me passes. Then you must leave everything and escape to Lady Calthorpe. You must not be afraid. Your father will never give his consent after what passed between us to-day. Did you see him this afternoon?"

"He went away early in the morning and came back in a furious rage. I have known him even in a more terrible rage. What he said to my stepmother! But she is not afraid of him. He cannot compete with her in a quarrel. They have nothing but quarrels now—awful! I shut myself up in my room. I tried to reconcile them. No use."

"My love, to think of your living in such a hell! Have you courage? Why not run the chance now? . . . . No, no; forgive me, dear: I will not try to persuade you—to influence you. I know that you will come to me at the right time. Editha will take charge of you, and you need not think that you will ever again be placed in your father's

power. I have just acquired a hold on him that I might use to my own advantage; I shall certainly not hesitate to use it to your advantage."

The hoot of the horn sounded behind them. The motor slowed down when it came alongside where they were sauntering.

"Now then, get aboard. I'm fixed up," shouted Mr. Geyermeyer.

"We have said all that we wished to say," whispered Arthur, paying no attention to the insistence of the *diabolus ex machinâ*. "You know what to do; they can hardly keep you a prisoner at that place."

"Say, are you going to get aboard or not?" came the petrolic voice.

"You need not fear for me," said Olive, looking up to Arthur's face. "But he is my father—I have to repeat that formula many times every day. I think I can bear with anything now. I am so happy only with having seen you that I feel as if I could never be unhappy again."

"Ah, you do love me," he whispered.

She did not answer; but the hand that she put out to him after a little pause was warm. Without a word she turned from him and mounted the motor. In a second Mr. Geyermeyer had put on his power. The machine began to move, but that second was enough to send her hand out to Arthur once again.

"Yes, yes; you are right. I do—I do," she said. His hand just touched hers, but he saw the light that illuminated her face, and he knew that her love had returned to her. There was no shadow of doubt to obscure that love-light in her eyes.

And then she was whirled away from him.

He watched her until the car disappeared where the road made a bend round the foot of the low hills. His heart was full of happiness. The moment for which he had waited had come. He had won her a second time. He was too happy to have a mind to ask himself what he meant to do now that she knew she loved him as she had loved him in that forgotten past life of hers. It seemed to him also as if he could never be unhappy again. Everything else was secondary to this triumph which he had achieved. Nothing could be entirely wrong now that love was entirely right. A consideration of details such as would be necessary to bring her to him in person seemed paltry. It might be left to such a prosaic business person as Mr. Willis. It was enough for him to feel that she loved him. If he did justice to that feeling, he would have no room for any other sentiment—any other thought—any other consideration.

And that was why he told Mr. Willis that, after giving twenty-four hours' consideration to the matter, he had arrived at the conclusion that it would be wiser for him to remember signing his name on the back of the bill which Mr. Austin had accepted at Homburg. He had said to Olive that he had a hold upon her father of such a character as would compel him to grant his request to any proposition that might be laid before him. But now he had made up his mind to make no use of that power which he had acquired through a knowledge of the forgery of his name. He felt that it was right that he should hold in scorn any such scheme to give him an advantage over Mr. Austin. He felt like the chivalrous young lover of romance, who after disarming his antagonist in a duel, hands him back his weapon with a bow.

the first attempt. If it is
depend on its being follow
up."

"That is just the danger
perhaps we shall not be ca
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Mr. Willis smiled very gri

"If the bank accepts a for

"His wife would not see
of a paltry fifteen hundred pc

Mr. Willis's smile became

"She may not have much
said. "As a matter of fa
freedom than her husband i
Harris, the jeweller, sold he
she arrived—a ring at eigl
for her son at thirty-two; h
by the rumours of her weal
trade was strictly a cash one.
to send a cheque that night;

Arthur promised to do his best to resist such a craving, and shortly afterwards drove home. His feeling of exultation never forsook him, and it was increased by his sense of his own generosity in respect of Mr. Austin. Generosity is the most acute form of selfishness; it is one of the paying virtues, and assuredly the satisfaction which he derived from its exercise in the case of Mr. Austin constituted a very fair dividend on the fifteen hundred pounds which he would probably have to pay in a day or two. He actually felt himself hoping that Mrs. Austin would not cheat him out of the privilege of being chivalrous, by taking over her husband's liabilities.

It was only when he was seated in his library after dinner that he began to recall something of what Mr. Austin had said regarding his daughter and—a gentleman. "Gentleman" was the word which Mr. Austin had used, and from the description which Christy Carew had given of Mrs. Austin's son, he had no difficulty in knowing to whom Olive's father referred.

The word is only used nowadays to describe some one who has no right to it, and Arthur knew that his visitor of the morning was impelled to use the word for this reason. He had threatened Arthur with this stepson of his, and Arthur felt that, although the threat might be an empty one, for Olive would certainly never listen to a proposal from Mr. Geyermeyer, yet it would quite as certainly be in his power to make Olive's life miserable to her.

In these circumstances, all that remained to be done was to get the girl out of his power; and with this end clearly before his eyes, he could not help feeling that the best way to get her out of his power would be to get her father into his, Arthur Garnett's, power. Possibly he had been a

little too impulsive about assuming the liability for that fraudulent bill. No, he would not admit such a suggestion. He would not take up the position of one fighting Mr. Austin with his own weapons. He would not take up the position of one offering (practically) the sum named in the bill to purchase the neutrality, to say the least, of Mr. Austin.

He destroyed more than one excellent cigar, and did more or less damage to the smaller articles of furniture in the room—footstools are for the feet to kick in such circumstances—while making a mental *résumé* of the situation as it existed at that moment; but he did not quite destroy his own feeling of triumph—the result of seeing that look illuminate her face when she put out her hand to him from her seat on the motor-car. He tramped up and down the room, feeling a timbrel song beating about his ears, the motive of which was, "She has come back to me—she has come back to me."

But before he went to bed he had become more practical and less lyrical. He made up his mind to pay a visit to Editha Calthorpe in the morning and to ask her advice as to the steps which should be taken in order to remove Olive from the sphere of influence of Mr. Austin.

CHAPTER XXIV

HE had ordered his horse and was reading his letters in the morning when his butler came to him with a message that a person was anxious to speak with him for a moment.

"What sort of person?" Arthur asked. "Not about a bazaar?"

"This is not a bazaar sort of person, sir," the butler replied. "A young man—quite respectable; not a footman—a valet, he might be. I told him, of course, that you were going out in five minutes, and asked him if he had written for permission, or if Mr. Willis wouldn't do. No, he said; but five minutes would be enough. It was important, he said—business, he said; he is quite respectable, sir—not to say, sooperior."

"I'll give him five minutes," said Arthur.

Arthur was not greatly troubled with promiscuous morning callers. His butler was to be trusted. He did not immediately recognise the young man who entered, but when the man mentioned his name—Alison—he remembered when he had seen him. It was at the Hôtel National; he was Mr. Austin's invaluable valet. Arthur pulled himself together.

"I can give you five minutes—no, three minutes now,"

he said. "If it is private, follow me into the breakfast-room."

"It is rather private, sir, leastways for the present," said the man; "and it doesn't relate to myself in any way."

Arthur rose, tore up an envelope or two, and led the way to the breakfast-room.

"You said it was nothing that I could do for you," said Mr. Garnett.

"Nothing, sir. I feel that I have took a libbety, Mr. Garnett, sir, but there's times when a libbety may be took without offence being meant. I have left the service of Mr. Hostin after being with him for five years, sir. I couldn't with self-respeck stay any longer with him—with them, I should say—*them*. He wasn't over easy to get on with in the old days, as maybe you'll believe, sir; but he was a hangel compared to now—a white hangel, sir."

"Yes; that's all very true, I daresay," broke in Mr. Garnett; "but it doesn't get us on, does it? I told you that I had only three minutes."

"I beg pardon, sir; I got carried away by my feelings, only I felt that it was doo to myself to make some sort of an excoose—though I don't need it, sir. I can stand Mr. Hostin swearing at me for a fool with a bootjack or a brush-case or anything 'andy and throwable—a gentleman is a gentleman; but when it comes to a lady as isn't a lady, and a whelp with a face like a oyster-shell—the outside shell, sir—that's mor'n I can abide. A fambly party! Mr. Garnett, sir, she made up to him at 'Omburg thinking as how he was a great English county magnet—he talked of his estates and his shootings and his horses, and she took him for a county magnet; and she replied with stories of the late lamented and his coloneling and his millionairing—

Mr. Hostin thought he had found the harticle he was in search of for a good many years, sir. I thought it my dooty to warn him, respeckful, of course. The mark of my interference is on here, sir—just on the shoulder-blade; it was a boot that he hadn't been wearing for some time, and it had got 'ard. But he married her: he had somehow got hold of a thousand pounds—a bill that some one had cashed for him, I understand—and he made a good show on that for a week or two. I believe it was only three days ago that each of them learned how they had both been taken in—not a cent between 'em. The 'ouse was a 'ell, a reglar 'ell, that day, with ormolu flying about the droring-room, and the crash of a mirror here and there and the——"

"My good fellow, what have I to do with all this?" cried Mr. Garnett, rising. "The domestic life of Mr. and Mrs. Austin does not interest me, I assure you."

"I'm a fool for taking up your time with such a rigmarole, sir. All that I came to tell you, Mr. Garnett, is that the young lady is no more the daughter of Mr. Hostin than I am a waiting-maid to the Queen of Shebar," said the man, leaning forward and speaking in a whisper, with one hand resting on the table.

"Can you prove that? If you can prove it I'll pay you five hundred pounds," said Arthur, when he had recovered from his astonishment.

"I looked for a 'undred pounds, sir—no more," said the man; "but if you had refused to recognise my claim to a single penny I would have spent a hundred pounds of my own savings—I've always been a saving man—making it public; for don't you think that I saw how the young lady was cold-shouldered by all the best people

in the county because she was the daughter of Mr. Hostin?"

"Have you proof—proof of what you say?" cried Arthur. "I don't want any of your hearsay—kitchen tattle; I want proofs—black and white."

"I'm what magistrates call an intellingent man, Mr. Garnett. I know what's evidence and what's not. Mr. Hostin was always very careless about his papers; I learned a good amount from them that came into my hands—I got the bricks of my heddyfice from them, so to speak, and the mortar was supplied by Charles Bamwell, of No. 32, Claireville Street, South Kensington, boarding-house keeper, and formerly servant to Mr. and Mrs. Hostin, the first Mrs. Hostin—mortar that cemented the bricks into one 'armonious 'ole, sir. I give away everything, you see, sir. I'm not the man to bargain—so much for the man's name, so much for his letters, so much for his photygraphs. Lor', Mr. Garnett, if one doesn't see the likeness between Miss Hostin, so called, and that cabinet, all I can say is that they haven't eyes, sir."

He was turning over the bundles of papers which he had taken from his breast pocket, and he threw on the table the photograph of a lady bearing a remarkable likeness to Olive.

Arthur examined it with great interest.

"This is the photograph of her mother?" he said.

"It is, sir, as anybody with eyes could tell. It is the photograph of Mrs. Major Strickland, and she was the mother of Miss Olive Strickland. Major Strickland had been a brother officer of Mr. Hostin's, and he believed that Mr. Hostin had been badly treated by the War Office. He retired from the army a year or two after Mr. Hostin, and

Mrs. Hostin and Mrs. Strickland was great friends. They met in the States, where Major Strickland was shooting the buffaloes—'elping to exterminate them, sir, which was done as you know. I couldn't find out if the Hostins went out to the Stricklands—anyway, they were a lot together for a year or two. Then the Major was shot by accident in a street in St. Louis—the sheriff was trying to arrest a train robber and they were shooting at one another in the street; there's a noosepaper account of the fracas"—he selected a cutting gummed on to a sheet of notepaper, and laid it on the table. "The Major was shot dead and his wife died of a broken 'eart five months later. She had one child, three years of age. Lor', Mr. Garnett, sir, don't it sound as if I was reading it all out of a noosepaper? Anyhow, this child was committed by the mother to the care of her bosom friend, Mrs. Hostin, with funds—there didn't seem to be no lack of money—for her keep and schooling and herself when she should come of age. That money was vested in Mrs. Hostin, and when she died it went to her widower. He brought the child to England when she was nine, and put her to school in Paris under the name of Hostin, and gave out that she was his daughter here and everywhere, and she thought herself the same, having lived since she was three with him and his wife. Her money came in very 'andy for him, sir. But he was very careless about his papers, Mr. Garnett."

"Will you leave with me all that you think has a bearing upon the parentage? The story is a strange one—no, not so strange, after all. But her family—her family in England—that's the strange part. Have you found out anything about them?"

"The Major's father and mother were dead; he was an

only child, sir. There was two cousins in India—I found out so much through Mr. Bamwell, though he isn't a very intellingent man, and couldn't see how anything could be made out of the matter. I saw that, sir. Knowing how erratic-like was Mr. Hostin, I felt sure that some day we should have to part, and so I took some trouble putting two and two together. It cost me altogether about ten pounds, Mr. Garnett, but I had a notion that I could recoup myself some day, so I took trouble over the matter. My idea was that the young lady might have English relations—or she might turn out to be a great heiress. I was always fond of reading, sir. Not rubbishy stuff like 'Dick Turpin' or *Tit-bits*; no, sir. Marie Corelli is my favourite, and Guy Boothby, not but what there's a sound moral in Joseph 'Ocking."

Arthur was turning over the thick sheaf of papers which the man handed to him, and the man feared that literary criticism was lost upon him.

"H'm, you have taken a good deal of trouble over this," remarked Mr. Garnett. "One or two of these papers are not copies; they are original letters addressed to Mr. Austin."

"That would tell against me in a court of law, sir," said the man. "The fact is that I meant to copy those out and restore them to his desk; but somehow I never found time to do it. If you observe, sir—it just struck me this morning—those originals are the most important documents of all. One of them is from the firm of lawyers in the States who acted for Mrs. Strickland. It refers to the child's fortune. So far as I have been able to discover, the money passed directly from Mrs. Hostin to her husband."

"So it would appear from this letter," said Arthur.

"You will have no objection to leave everything with me for a day or two?"

"Not the least, sir; and I hope I'm not taking an undoo liberty, Mr. Garnett, when I give you my word of honour, sir, that although at first I went into that business with no thought except that I might be able to make something off it—quite legitermate, considering of my humble position in life, sir,—yet at the end, when I saw how the young lady was cold-shouldered in the county, I had such a pity for her—quite respeckful, sir—that I made up my mind, if the worst came to the worst, I'd act quite square and get a lawyer to act for her. I don't ask credit for it, sir; to see Miss Hos—Miss Strickland, that's her name, though mine is the first tongue to speak it—to see her among these people—Mr. Garnett, sir, it was like seeing a hangelic being among fiends of the pit. And the son came upon her alone in the droring-room two days ago. He put his harm around her waist; I heard her cry. She was standing by the open window when I walked in by the door. He called me a 'ound—a 'ound, when I said quite respeckful that Mr. Hostin had told me never to neglect winding up the timepiece. 'Twice a day?—you wound it this morning,' said he. 'Three times if needful, sir,' said I. 'You're a 'ound,' said he. 'You're a Jew swine and measly at that, sir,' said I, beginning to turn up my cuffs. The young lady left the room at that point, sir. I 'eld the door open for her. I don't take credit for it, Mr. Garnett; any man would have done as much. And let me repeat, sir, that a hundred pounds was the sum that I had in my mind."

"Five hundred is the sum that I named, if——" said Arthur.

"That is mor'n liberal, Mr. Garnett," said the man. "I 'ope you'll pardon me for taking up your time, sir."

Mr. Garnett laughed; the man was comically grave as he looked into the trough of his soft hat and went to the door, adding:

"Good-morning, sir. I shall be at the 'Three Choughs' for the rest of the week. Charles Bamwell, who told me so much, is a honest man—not too intellingent, but quite honest—leaving the boarding-house business out of the question. Of course, your solicitors will see that he will need to be approached cautiously. He might get it on his mind that it was to be a murder trial, which would mean good business for a country innkeeper, but ruin to a Kensington boarding-house. Good-morning, sir."

"Good-morning," said Mr. Garnett.

The moment that he had gone Arthur ordered his horse to be taken back to the stables until further instructions, and went into his library. He laid out on a desk all the documents which the man had left with him, and began to study them in their order. He had never been engaged in a task which interested him so much as this. Mr. Alison was clearly something of a genius. He should have been a lawyer's clerk, or a book-maker, or something that demanded the possession of a clear head and a nice sense of proportion. All the papers were arranged so as to form a complete and consecutive narrative, and it was Graingerised by such "insets" as photographs, newspaper paragraphs, and autographs. It was circumstantial to a marvellous extent, and it even contained a transcript from a *Gazette* of a certain date, announcing the retire-

ment of Major Stapleton Strickland from the Army. If he had been preparing a case to submit to counsel, he could not have done it more admirably.

Within an hour Arthur Garnett found himself in command of the main facts of the case, and they bore out, with a slight deviation here and there, the story told by the valet who had just emancipated himself. It was quite clear that the man had never had a scruple about ransacking his master's private papers and extracting such letters, documents, and photographs as were necessary for the completion of such a chain of evidence as would, Arthur thought, convince any jury—at the sacrifice of Mr. Alison's future claim to be considered a person with a delicate sense of honour—that Mr. Austin had been guilty of a gross fraud in causing it to be assumed (see letters marked in red ink G, K, and L) that the daughter of Major Strickland and Agnes his wife was his, Ambrose Austin's, daughter, and in spending the money which had been left in trust for her to his wife.

The satisfaction that Arthur derived from a perusal of the papers and from a scrutiny of the photographs,—he dwelt long and lovingly upon the one of Mrs. Strickland: the costume of the latter 'seventies did not prevent the likeness to Olive from being striking,—was greater than he had ever derived from the same amount of reading. He felt as Christian the Pilgrim did when the burden fell from his shoulders. He actually felt physically relieved, as if he had suddenly got into a rarer atmosphere; he had a sense of being transferred in a moment of time to the highest slopes of the Alps; he had once more hold of Olive's hand, and they were climbing side by side up among the snows.

placated or quarrelled with,

And then, manlike, he b
of his own fidelity. Now
different a complexion fro
viously worn, he wondered
knowing as he did how ra
Austin, to throw himself
bore the name of Austin.
Arthur Garnett, who had alw
and dreaded doing anything
rash, to place himself in the
some might call indiscreet.

But he had done it, ar
want of discretion, and the
sat very lightly upon him
burden had fallen away from
but it had never crushed hi
that his love for the girl h
heaven.

"Ah, the White Causewa

to his senses. He hastened into the dining-room, and ate his sole and cutlet with excellent relish, and he went in the strength of this food into the billiard-room, and smoking a cigar, read once again all the papers of the "case." It had originally been his intention to go with them straight to Editha Calthorpe, but after taking thought, he did a wiser thing; he took them to Mr. Willis, who was his solicitor as well as his business man.

Of course, Mr. Willis pretended that he was not in the least astonished at the story of which Arthur placed him in possession. But with regard to the evidence which bore it out—that was quite another matter. It was clear that Mr. Alison was as unscrupulous as he was clever.

"Of course he is," said Arthur. "The two usually go arm-in-arm—cleverness and unscrupulousness. But we must make allowance for the man's position in life. A bishop is like an ordinary man to the Turkish bath attendant. The valet saw his master devoid of all scruples, and thought that he would serve him—serve him out."

"He has stolen his master's property, and may be sent to gaol," said the solicitor.

"Then he will meet his master there," said Arthur, "for I mean to get a warrant for his arrest before the set of sun."

"You will do nothing of the sort," said Mr. Willis. "Leave the papers with me, and I will look them carefully over this evening. I may have to get counsel's opinion on some points."

"And in the meantime, the girl whom the scoundrel has cheated will be liable to his insults and the insults of that young bounder who is under the same roof? That is not my idea of scrupulously fair dealing, Willis. I will have the

information sworn in the morning; I will give you until the morning."

"You see, this is a matter which, if there is anything in it at all, should be taken up by the Crown," said Mr. Willis. "At this moment I cannot just see what *locus standi* we have in the case."

"Then you had better see it by to-morrow," said Arthur.

"Most of the evidence—if it be evidence—against the man is made up of stolen letters, and——"

"I will apply for the warrant to-morrow morning. That's my last word."

"I'll ring you up in good time," said Mr. Willis, when Arthur was leaving the office.

Between the hours of ten and eleven the next morning Mr. Willis rang up his principal, and told him that he had in his possession a warrant for the arrest of Ambrose Austin, and also a document which might, if brought in a proper spirit under the notice of Mr. Austin, save the trouble and expense involved in putting the first-named in operation—this being a formal acknowledgment of the statements, "*set forth as follows*":—

Here followed a list of a rather formidable series of delinquencies, the chief being in Mr. Willis's eyes "the appropriation of certain monies (herein after named) intended for the sole use and maintenance of the said Olive Strickland, and in such wise entrusted to my care."

Mr. Willis read out the list into the susceptible ear of the telephone, and mentioned that he was about to set out for King's Croft, with the document, to consult Mr. Garnett as to the steps to be taken with a view to obtain the signature of Ambrose Austin.

Arthur told him that he would await his coming with impatience, and then sent a telegram to Editha Calthorpe begging her to be at home between the hours of three and four o'clock. He saw in a moment that it would be a gross strategical mistake to pay a surprise visit (with two policemen in waiting) to Mr. Austin, without making arrangements to take away Olive from the same house. He knew that Editha would be overjoyed to receive Olive once more under her roof for—how long? Arthur Garnett was a county magistrate; in addition, he was a well-informed man: and yet he could not say at a moment's notice on what terms a special licence could be obtained. But he felt sure that he could be married to Olive within a month.

The telegram despatched, he threw himself into one of the easy chairs in the hall to await the arrival of Mr. Willis. He was in a condition of excitement that a careful perusal of the local newspaper utterly failed to allay.

Mr. Willis had his excitement, too, for although he drove a very steady horse in his dogcart, he ran the nearest possible chance of being run down before he had passed over more than three miles of his road, by a motor which was flying along at an enormous speed, driven by a young woman with a white face and wide eyes, the sole occupant of the machine, and one of the worst steerers he had ever seen.

He ran his near wheel half-way up a bank, and just avoided the charge of the motor-car.

"What on earth are things coming to?" he cried. "Who can that young woman be? The machine seems to have run away with her."

"It is Mr. Austin's daughter, sir—leastways, I think so; the motor is Mr. Austin's, anyway," said his groom.

"Gracious heavens!" said Mr. Willis. "I hope that she will not be killed. She clearly knows nothing about the management of a motor."

"The young lady is learning, sir," said the groom, with fine stable irony. "We must all learn, sir."

"How can she possibly escape?" said Mr. Willis.

"Easy enough, sir. A breakdown of the machine has caused many a motorist's escape—more's the pity."

"What can be the meaning of it?" muttered Mr. Willis; but this question was outside the province of the groom. He could see no meaning in motors or motorists.

Mr. Willis whipped up his horse to the curve where the two roads met, and he was just in time to catch a distant glimpse of the motor-car, with Olive at the steering-wheel, tearing along the road leading to the village of Barn Havelton, off which a narrower road branched to Calthorpe Place.

"Young lady is learning quickly, sir; she's steering better already. She'll gain experience as she goes along," said the man.

His master said nothing, but turning his horse to the right, drove on toward King's Croft, musing upon that question:

"What can be the meaning of it?"

CHAPTER XXV

ARTHUR GARNETT sat in the hall, whistling cheerfully as he scanned the two-column report of the Board of Guardians, which was very funny, and the large-type leading article attacking the foreign policy of the Government, which was funnier still. Mr. Willis was not due for half an hour at least; so he was somewhat surprised to hear the sound of rapid wheels on the drive. He threw away the paper and was about to rise, when he saw, through the glass that separated the hall from the porch, a single-horse fly pull up at the door. The next instant a young man in motoring costume, whom he recognised as Mr. Geyermeyer, dashed through the half-open door and plunged into the hall.

"Where is she?" he shouted, looking eagerly around. "I'll find her, or I'll know the reason why!"

"Look here," said Arthur, now upon his feet: "what the mischief do you mean by breaking into a place in this fashion? This isn't a whiskey chute, let me tell you."

"Don't you interfere with me, sirree. I'll pick up that girl or know the reason why," cried Mr. Geyermeyer.

"I'll know the reason why you are here, or I'll send you out on your head," said Arthur, now in a white heat, burning for a fight. "Stand where you are, or I'll make

short work of you. Don't go through that door. Who is it that you are in search of?"

"You know as well as I do," shouted the visitor. "You know that Olive Austin ran away with the motor when her father and I dismounted at the 'Choughs'; and she came on here—I met Alison, the valet, and he told me that she had passed him coming here. Now, mister, you'd best produce her."

For a moment Arthur stood aghast.

"Heavens above! The machine must have started with her," he said huskily.

"Not much," cried Geyermeyer. "Come, you swine; say where you've hid her, or by the living——"

His hand went with a flash down to his hip pocket, and at the same instant Arthur leaped upon him; the revolver made a parabolic curve in the air, and the cartridge exploded, the bullet just missing the calf of a footman in morning dress who burst into the hall through the servants' door.

The man rushed forward, but he saw in a moment that his master did not need his help. He was a good servant, and the convenances came to him automatically.

"Did you ring, sir?" he asked, while his master was throttling his visitor.

Mr. Garnett laughed, and relaxed his grip somewhat.

"Yes," he said. "Fetch me one of the riding-crops from the porch."

"Yessir."

"What do you mean to do?" gurgled Mr. Geyermeyer; a wish that he had not left his leathern coat in the machine when dismounting at the "Three Choughs" may have flashed upon him.

"You'll find out in a minute," said the man who had packed up into a convenient bundle for his left hand the front of the young man's shirt, the collar of his coat, and part of his waistcoat. "I'm going to wind up the time-piece," he added, trusting that the phrase would suggest to the young man an incident for which retribution had not yet been made.

If the young man did not at once understand what he meant, he lost his chance for ever, for the well-trained servant put into his master's hand a trustworthy malacca riding-whip, and Mr. Garnett, giving Mr. Geyermeyer an artistic twist half-way round—one might have fancied that he had studied the technique of flogging directly from Dr. Busby—began his work upon the wriggling person of the yelling youth; while the servant stood respectfully by, ready to open the door and announce any visitor who might arrive.

The flogging of Mr. Geyermeyer was positively epic. The hall was filled with the dust gathered during a motor-ride of fifteen or twenty miles; bits of fluff fluttered up to the ceiling from the lining and the padding of the young man's jacket, for the seam just at the back of the collar gave way early, and gaped almost to his waist; from the region of the waist the buttons began to fly at intervals, like exploding squibs during a fire at a factory of pyrotechnics. One of them struck the footman on the arm, and he caught it deftly before it fell. He did not return it to the owner just then; a voice from the servants' door said, "Well caught!" At the servants' door the faces were six deep, for the scene was not taking place in absolute silence. Mr. Geyermeyer was yelling and sprawling, and kicking out, and trying to bite; but though

the bursting of the seam in his hands interfered a little with Mr. Garnett's plans, he was able to adapt his pose to the altered conditions almost immediately, so that he was not seriously inconvenienced.

Mr. Geyermeyer was. In the hands of Arthur Garnett he was as powerless as a leveret in the talons of a falcon. He never had a chance of escape from the first. He only managed to kick his assailant once, and he found that that only drew the attention of Mr. Garnett to a limb that he had hitherto neglected, and Mr. Garnett got home upon the bulge of his calf and the soft muscles of his thighs. He tried biting; but Mr. Garnett's elbow nearly broke his jaw, and after that he took it lying down, and in a moment he perceived that Mr. Garnett was discouraged. The rest of the performance was well-meant, he knew, but the man's heart was not in it. It lacked finish and was feeble in style.

Arthur at last flung him upon the Turkey rug and the riding-whip into a corner, and at practically the same moment the footman flung open the porch door and announced:

"Mr. Willis, sir."

Mr. Willis entered and glanced around, first at the prostrate bundle of rags, and then at the panting man who was wiping his forehead with a handkerchief.

"My word! my word," was all that he could say by way of comment.

"If there's law in the land—if there's law in the land!" Mr. Geyermeyer was gasping, trying to find out what was exactly the matter with his jacket, and how far he might trust the other portions of his attire—the portions that were suspended.

"Mr. Willis entered and glanced at the prostrate bundle."

[*To face p.* 302.

Arthur made a motion to the servant; and he helped Mr. Geyermeyer to his feet.

"A wash and brush-up, sir," he said soothingly.

"If there's law in this land!" murmured the young man, hoarsely, and still murmuring, the servant led him forth.

"What on earth——?" began Mr. Willis.

"I don't think that that cur will be quite so playful in future," said Arthur.

"Good heavens! You waste time flogging that fellow when perhaps the young woman is lying dead on the road-side!" cried Mr. Willis.

Arthur caught him by the arm.

"Man, what do you mean?" he whispered.

"It overtook me three miles out of the town—the motor, driven by the girl alone—no one else in it."

Arthur dropped into a chair.

"That was what he must have meant," he said. "I see it all now. They had brought her out in the motor, and when they dismounted at the 'Choughs,' she ran away with it—the only way she could escape from them. She has driven Calthorpe's motor now and again—he taught her. The fellow thought that she would come here. Of course, she went to Editha's."

He got upon his feet again, and ran to the stable telephone.

"The dogcart—like fury!" he called.

He looked at his hands and hurried into the cloak-room.

"You are right," said Mr. Willis. "She took the turn to Barn Havelton—that would take her to the Calthorpes'. I did not think that she had ever driven a car before."

"Oh, yes," said Arthur, through the half-open door. "She is not killed."

And then the door of the cloak-room swung to.

Mr. Willis, when left alone, indulged in a laugh. He looked round the hall, and saw the riding-crop on the floor in one place and the revolver in another. He picked up the latter and carefully secreted it behind the carved oak plume of a coat-of-arms at the side of the fireplace.

Before Arthur had returned with a clean face and hands and a less crumpled coat than the one in which he had had some unusual exercise, the dogcart was at the door.

"You will come with me?" he said to Mr. Willis.

"Certainly," said Mr. Willis; "it is all in the day's work."

And then Arthur did some driving.

Three miles from Calthorpe Place the dogcart was met by Sir Everard, who was driving his motor. He pulled up. His face was grave.

"For God's sake," gasped Arthur, "do not tell me that she is—no, no; that would be impossible."

"No; but there has been an accident—not ten feet from our door. You know that she ran away with the motor. She got through the gates all right, but close to the house she put on the brake too suddenly, and the gearing gave way. She was thrown into one of the bay-trees close to the lawn. She has been unconscious for an hour. Byers is with her. He is not afraid."

Without a word Arthur gave the reins to Mr. Willis and dismounted. He got beside Sir Everard and the dogcart was soon left a mile behind.

Once more he found himself face to face with Editha in a room with Olive lying unconscious on a bed beside

them. Mr. Byers, the local surgeon, was leaning over her.

"Ah, Lucerne, Lucerne," said Arthur, with a laugh that made Lady Calthorpe feel chill.

"There is not a scratch on her," said the surgeon. "Well, perhaps—but only a scratch. She is suffering from the strain on her nerves only. She was thrown straight into the foliage of the bay. Her nerves were overstrained."

Arthur looked at the exquisite white face on the pillow and he thought of that terrible evening when he had seen it with the water rippling over it. Had he saved her then only to see her die before him now?

He caught her hand and kissed it wildly, holding it close to him—he kissed it again and again.

All at once he dropped it. A flash of memory had come to him. He threw himself on his knees at the bedside and cried:

"Olive, my love—my love, come back to me. Olive, my love, come back to me."

There was a long silence.

It was broken by an exclamation from Lady Calthorpe.

The surgeon forced a spoonful of brandy between the girl's lips, and every one saw that her lips moved like those of a sleeping infant.

Then her eyes opened.

Only for a moment did she seem dazed. Her eyes rested on Arthur and she smiled faintly. She closed them again, but the smile remained. Her lips moved. She accepted another spoonful of brandy.

"I remember all," she said. "You were to take me in the boat, but he prevented you. That was on the fourth day after we arrived from Fée. Arthur, do you remember

the man who talked of Beachy Head? Do you remember the chapels on the road to Saas-im-Grund?—the marmots in the cage?"

"Dearest!" said Arthur.

"And the long walk through the valley—somehow we have never talked about that walk as it deserves," she went on. "And Stalden—I wonder if Christy will have another try at the Matterhorn? We were so certain of getting father's consent that we enjoyed every day in Switzerland. Oh, Arthur, I have a lot to remember."

"It has come back to her," cried Editha. "Her memory has come back to her. Dearest Olive, do you recollect leaving England with us in August?"

"Of course I do; we were only one night in Paris. I wanted to pay a visit to my old school; but you said I had better do so on my return."

Editha threw herself on her knees by the bedside. Sir Everard went to the window and looked out. The surgeon was talking to Mr. Willis.

"I have heard of a case on all fours with this," he said. "A sudden shock deprived the subject of her memory; a second shock, a year later, restored it. To-day's accident was certainly a lucky one for Miss Austin. You may depend on her being absolutely restored."

And then there came a cry from the door—the cry of the heart-broken parent.

"My child, my child! Alive—alive! Ah, thank heaven! thank heaven!"

Mr. Austin tottered toward the bed.

She opened her eyes.

"Do not let him come near me," she cried. "He is my father, but——"

"He has come to tell you that he is not your father," said Arthur.

"Yes, that is why he has come," said Mr. Willis, taking a paper from his breast pocket.

"He has come to tell you that you are justified in hating him," said Sir Everard, who had heard the story from Arthur in the motor.

Mr. Austin had dropped upon a chair. He looked wildly at Arthur, then at Mr. Willis; but he spoke no word.

Lady Calthorpe was quite as much surprised.

"Yes," said Mr. Willis. "He has cheated every one—you among the number, my dear. And when he signs this paper he will, I regret to say, have cheated the Crown Solicitor. You will sign there, Mr. Austin, please."

Mr. Austin spoke no word. He examined the nib of Mr. Willis's fountain pen. He removed a hair from it. Then he signed his confession, and Mr. Willis compromised a felony by watching him.

In the silence Olive put out a hand to Arthur. She drew him down to her, and glancing sideways at the man who had called himself her father, whispered:

"He pushed me off the boat when it had capsized; he pushed me off it when he found that it would not support both of us."

THE END

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By Wm. LE QUEUX

Author of "The Gamblers," "The Under Secretary," etc.

It is understood that Mr. Le Queux's new novel contains as good a story as any he has yet concocted; there is all the old skill in engrossing the readers' attention in the working out of a capital plot, but beyond this the greatest care has been taken in the writing of the book, and it is not too much to say that it shows the author at his best.

The Grand Duke

By CARLTON DAWE

Author of "Claudia Pole," "A Bride of Japan," etc.

The hero of Mr. Carlton Dawe's new story, an Englishman speaking Russian is, while at Monte Carlo, mistaken by a beautiful girl for a certain Russian Grand Duke, at whose orders the girl's brother has been imprisoned. The Englishman is drugged and locked in a dungeon, but is soon released, as the real Duke appears. He has, however, fallen in love with the girl, and is won over to assist her in a daring scheme to free her brother, which leads to exciting adventures in Russia, before he ultimately succeeds. It is a story which comes *a propos* the extraordinary Beck case, and is written so convincingly that the interest is kept tense until the end.

Linked by Fate

By CHARLES GARVICE

Author of "Love Decides," etc.

The author displays in this novel all his power of creating dramatic situations, with strong human interests, and also his skill in the development of an intricate plot and the attractive presentation of life-like characters. Some of the scenes of his new book are again laid in Australia, and there is a strong love-story which will command close attention. The press has recently said of Mr. Garvice that "he is a born story-teller with the gift of imagination and the born story-teller's art of conducting a story," and that "he bids fair to build up as successful a reputation on this side of the Atlantic as on the other side, where his books have an enormous vogue." This is as it should be, as Mr. Garvice is an Englishman resident in his own country.

Patricia: a Mother

By "IOTA"

Author of "A Yellow Aster," "A Quaker Grandmother," etc.

This new novel, by a popular author, will be read with unflagging interest, and it is likely to make its mark, for it is undoubtedly the best story the Author has yet produced. It is written with all "Iota's" strength, and it is free from the faults of her earlier work. Patricia is a brilliant creature, an Australian of Irish extraction, tied to an exacting husband, whose mother—a saint in pose—sets him on a pedestal. When the husband dies, Patricia and her boy are left dependent on his mother. Patricia is unconventional, and is slandered, and a struggle begins between mother and grandmother, each striving to influence the boy in her own way, and the winning of Tom by Patricia is one of the most interesting features of the book, for she does it in ways that few women could face. A bachelor friend helps Patricia, and it is of him that rumour is busy; but Patricia braves much for her boy, and in the end stands out a splendid type of woman. All the characters are vividly drawn and uncommonly presented, and in Patricia and her mother-in-law, the author gives us two magnificent pieces of portraiture. The scenes are laid in England.

The Clairvoyante

By the late B. L. FARJEON

Author of "Aaron the Jew," "The Betrayal of John Fordham," etc.

It is probable that this will be the last of the late Mr. Farjeon's novels to be published. It is outside the ordinary run of his books and likely to attract notice. The story is told by a prison doctor and is concerned with a woman convict, a lady who had not willingly done wrong, but, who has been controlled by her husbands hypnotic suggestions; she has the power of second sight and is terrorized by her husband's attempts to make her reveal a secret regarding their young daughter. The Doctor befriends her and discovering that his will is also strong to influence others sets himself in opposition to the husband, and thereafter there is a struggle for mastery between the two men, one working for good the other for evil, Other characters are introduced, and the daughter who, like her mother gets into states of trance, is the centre of interest.

The Marble City

By G. B. BURGIN

Author of "The Shutters of Silence," "The Hermit of Bonneville," etc.

Mr. Burgin has earned a reputation by his Canadian tales and it is in Canada that the scene of his new novel is laid. It is a love story in which two women love the same man, a young stranger, "Jim," who gets a footing at Four Corners and is befriended by "old man." The Marble City lies near, half buried and known only to an Indian or two and "old man." About it there is treasure which causes trouble, and one of the best scenes in the book is that in which Angela desirous of wealth accompanies "old man" and Jim to the City to take back all the gold she can carry yet leaves it all to enrich herself still more with Jim's love.

The Three Essentials

By DOROTHEA GERARD

Author of "The Blood Tax," etc.

Although at first sight Madame Longard de Longgarde's new novel might be classed as a bright society story, a closer examination reveals something which is almost serious enough to be called a purpose, and the book might, perhaps, more fitly be described as a drama masquerading as a comedy; but throughout the story it is the little face of Eugenie Lebrun, who manages to be both *piquante* and pathetic, that is the guiding star. Whether there are three essentials or only one, and what that one is must be left to the reader to discover.

The Secret of Wold Hall

By E. EVERETT GREEN

Author of "The Silver Axe," "Olivia's Experiment," "Where There's a Will," etc.

Miss Everett-Green is a practised writer. In her new novel the story really begins with her heroine's marriage, more out of duty to her father than for love of the man, about whom there is a mystery which helps to keep husband and wife apart; but there is a satisfactory ending to a well told story, which is pleasing throughout, the character of the man being attractively presented.

The Rebel Wooing

By J. A. STEUART

Author of "The Minister of State," "The Eternal Quest," etc.

Mr. Steuart in his new story makes a special study of his characters, most of whom are Scots, and tells an interesting story. The love (which is reciprocated) of a young minister for the daughter of a rich elder, who remains obdurate to their sentiments, forms the basis of the book, and threads it from the first page to the last; but there is a subsidiary love story helping the interest. Primarily the novel is a penetrating study of Methven as minister and man, and it is doubtful whether the author has ever done anything so well; but the rich elder himself and others are so faithfully portrayed, that it would be hard to choose which interests most. The book will appeal to all who appreciate sound literary work.

The Sixth Sense

By ADELINE SERGEANT

Author of "The Mistress of Quest," "The Idol Maker," etc.

This novel, completed by Miss Sergeant but a few months before her lamented death, contains some of her best work. It opens with a family of young people, whose means are small, but Janet, the eldest daughter, succeeds in keeping the home together until the discovery that her brother Walter is heir to family estates in the possession of his cousin. The latter and his mother have living with them a Professor who possesses hypnotic power, and a girl Fenella whom the Professor influences and uses. The cousins meet and like one another, but the Professor through Fenella makes mischief. Complications follow, and Walter is trapped. There are several love-stories running through the book, which is full of interesting characters.

Guthrie of the "Times"

By JOSEPH A. ALTSHELER

Author of "Before the Dawn."

This is a vigorous and stiring tale of politics and newspaper life, and "Guthrie," the main character and a fine figure, is a keen resourceful and honourable American. The story of his achievements makes the best sort of reading. It should be added that the story also has it's feminine interest.

Mr. Chippendale of Port Welcome

By CHARLES FELLOWS

A book that will cause a hearty laugh is always welcome, and many a one will be got by a study of Mr. Chippendale. He is a character after the style of Mr. Micawber; he is always going to succeed but never does; his wonderful schemes and projects lead to nothing, yet he is a most plausible theorist, plays his parts well, and is always keen to start afresh with the most innocent confidence; he is excellent company, a wonderful talker, and will, no doubt, prove a very attractive character to a large number of readers. The story is more a narrative than a novel. It stands by itself as a one man book with his accessories; but a love interest is introduced with Mr. Chippendale's daughter. The real basis of the story is the dumping of the unfit in our Colonies, and the Author using Mr. Chippendale as an example, shows what material the Colonies have had to deal with.

A Prima Donna's Romance

By F. W. HAYES

Author of "A Kent Squire," "The Shadow of the Throne," etc.

In his new book, Mr. Hayes departs from historical romance and gives a modern story, which is not, however, without its adventurous side. The principal characters are two sisters, the supposed daughters of a Greek brigand. Their love affairs, through the intrigues of their "father," run anything but smoothly, involving as they do many risks on the part of their lovers. A leading, and one of the most interesting characters of the story, is the real father, who quite ignorant of his relationship, continually stands by the girls, but the key to the story is not given until the end, the interest being sustained from start to finish. The scenes are laid in England, Paris and Athens. Gambling, thieves and brigands are introduced, and most of the principal characters are at sometime in peril of their lives.

Aunt Phipps

By TOM GALLON

Author of "Tatterley," "Bodens Boy," etc.

Olive Varney, the principal character of this story, has been trained by her father to believe that for a wrong done to him by another man, it will be just and right for her to be revenged on Lucy, the young and innocent daughter of that man. Being able, by a chain of circumstances to impersonate an aunt of Lucy's lover, Olive obtains access to the house in which the lovers reside and commences her work. But Olive is not all bad, and is swayed first by her father's dying command, and then by her own better feelings, with the result that a tangle is created, which is made worse by the machinations of a would-be lover of Olive, and by the existence of the real Aunt Phipps. How the tangle is unravelled, and Olive made the good angel of the lovers must be learned from the book. It is sufficient to say that it is in Mr. Gallon's best vein, and that, despite her bad beginning, Olive earns for herself the same sympathy which the author's famous "Tatterley" compelled, for all his many faults.

The Middle Wall

By EDWARD MARSHALL

Author of "Lizette," etc.

With illustrations by LOUIS F. GRANT

Henry Parton goes to South Africa and discovers diamonds. He comes home with them and having foolishly assigned them, temporarily as he thought, to his mother to appease her desire for a show of affection, finds himself in difficulties with his step-father McFadden, who strives to secure the treasure. Parton is helped by Norah the ward of McFadden, and finds himself aboard a vessel owned by Captain Burgee, who befriends him and outwits the lawyer stepfather. On board Parton also finds an old and bitter enemy: the diamonds are lost in an extraordinary way and as marvellously recovered, and after many strange happenings the end is reached with the marriage of Norah and Parton. It is an uncommon and remarkably good story of adventure, and Captain Burgee who takes a leading part is a most amusing character: he is full of good stories and wise sayings, and his subtle humour cannot fail to please many readers.

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